ACROSS / A17

Truck rams vehicles; 17 dead, 14 hurt

SPORTS / A32

Red Auerbach, legendary Celtics coach, dies

WORLD / A28

Global warming could turn 200M people into refugees, says ex-World Bank official

Boy Scouts group now accepting girls

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

DUMAGUETE CITY—GIRLS AS boy scouts?

This is not a joke. The Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSP) is now ac-

BOY SCOUTS, A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, October 30, 2006 ★★ 10 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 324 P18 www.inq7.net

Supertyphoon slams RP

All Saints' Day trekkers advised not to head for northern Luzon

US bishops draft rules on gay ministry

ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS IN the United States have drafted new guidelines for their ministry to gay people that affirm Church teachings against same-sex relationships, marriages and adoption by gay couples, yet encourage parishes to reach out to gay Catholics who feel alienated by their Church.

The bishops' document, the result of a four-year effort, gives specific instructions on some of the conundrums now faced by many parishes.

The guidelines recommend baptizing the adopted children of same-sex couples, as long as the children will be raised as Catholics.

Under the draft guidelines, gay people may benefit from revealing their "weaknesses" to friends, family and their priest, but they should not make "general public

US BISHOPS, A4

IT has become a long journey into the night for this woman, along with hundreds of Cassellanos-bound boat passengers who have to wait for the lowering of typhoon signals at the port of Tabaco City in Albay. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER/TONY LEON

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Blanche S. Rivera and Alcuin Papa

PRAY AND HEED EVACUAtion instructions.

From China where she is on an official visit, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday made this appeal to residents of northern Luzon hit by a supertyphoon.

Supertyphoon "Paeng" (international code name: Cimaron, meaning wild or unruly) had strengthened as it approached the Philippines.

Packing sustained winds of 195 kilometers per hour with gusts of up to 230 kph, Paeng made landfall in the southern part of Isabela province at about 9 last night, according to the weather bureau.

Also last night, the President approved the recommendation of the Cabinet to ban travel to provinces under public storm Signals 3 and 4. Signal No. 4 is the highest level for a weather disturbance.

The weather bureau earlier raised Signal No. 4 over Isabela, southern Cagayan, Quirino and northern Aurora. Signal No. 3 was hoisted over the rest of Aurora and Cagayan, Nueva Vizcaya, Ifugao, Mt. Province, Pangasinan, Benguet, La Union, Abra, Ilocos Sur, Apayao and Kalinga.

The President also approved the suspension of classes and work in government offices in those areas.

SUPERTYPHOON, A4

Gloria vows to crush Reds within 3 years

By Christine O. Avendaño

LUBLIN CITY—ON THE THIRD DAY OF her visit to China, President Macapagal Arroyo said she hoped to "break the back" of the communist insurgency in the Philippines by the end of her term in 2010.

The President made the statement yesterday in an interview during a four-hour boat ride on the scenic Lijiang River, which was arranged by local officials in Guilin.

"For the rest of my term, I hope I would be able to break the back of the insurgency and that we can have peace and stability," she said when asked what she intended to achieve in the last three years of her term.

Ms Arroyo, who is on a five-day visit to China to seek investments for the Philip-

GLORIA VOWS, A4

GMA aide confirms Cabinet split but no revamp

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

A TOP MALACAÑANG OFFICIAL YESTERday confirmed the ill-starred people's initiative had divided President Macapagal-Arroyo's inner circle but said there would be no bloodbath in the Cabinet.

"Regardless of differences of opinion, I doubt very much if anybody within the Cabinet would move for the ouster of a colleague because of what happened to PI (people's initiative)," the President's political adviser, Gabriel Claudio, said.

He was referring to reports that some Cabinet secretaries were after the head of Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr., who had opposed the signature collection campaign to rewrite the Constitution.

"I don't believe changes in the Cabinet in the aftermath of the SC (Supreme Court) decision are forthcoming," Claudio said.

But he conceded that "that judgment is completely up to the President."

Claudio made the statement amid speculation that a Cabinet revamp was in the offing following the Supreme Court's 8-7 ruling last week rejecting the people's initiative petition of Sigaw ng Bayan and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap) and describing it as fraudulent and deceptive.

Cruz had been reported to have told

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GMA AIDE, A10

SC justices subordinate private gratitude to public interest

By Amando Doronila

THE VEHEMENCE OF THE SUPREME Court decision in dismissing the petition for a people's initiative to change the 1987 Constitution has aroused public attention more than the incisive arguments, either way that produced the ruling.

Few Supreme Court decisions in recent years have been expressed with stronger words and with more passion than the declaration that "an initiative that gathers signatures from the people without first showing to the people the full text of the proposed amendments is most likely a deceptive, and can operate as a gigantic fraud on the people."

The declaration stunned the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who had pushed for the initiative, and appalled some lawyers for its harsh language.

ANALYSIS

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, not a stranger to intemperate rhetoric, noted the "extremely strong and condemnatory language" of the decision, and some lawyers called it "vicious."

The strong reactions to the decision were symptomatic of the highly charged political atmosphere surrounding the issue of constitutional change and of the deep divisions it had opened across the nation.

The divisions and alignments were clearly shown in the list of intervenors and opposition to the petition submitted by the Lambino group.

The list embraced the broad spectrum of political and civil society forces that had spearheaded the campaign to oust Mr. Arroyo and had surged it to the streets and to Congress in the impeachment complaint against the President.

In that sense, the people's initiative petition became the issue through which

SC JUSTICES, A13

Ruby Tower earthquake survivors visit hallowed ground

By Jerry E. Esplanada

THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS AGO, THE six-story Ruby Tower apartment building on Dorotea Jose and Teodora Alonzo streets in Sta. Cruz, Manila, collapsed "like a house of cards" during an intensity 7 earthquake.

On that "Black Friday" 342 of the building's more than 680 tenants lost their lives.

Some 270 badly injured survivors were extricated from the rubble during rescue efforts that lasted more than a week and involved at least 6,000 volunteers. Twenty-seven among the injured

RUBY, A8

LIKE a house of cards, the six-story Ruby Tower apartment building fell during an intensity 7 earthquake on Aug. 2, 1968, killing 342 tenants. A two-story structure now stands on its site. INSET PHOTO BY ANGEL ESPLANADA (ARCHIVES)

WEATHER FORECAST

FRIDAY: Fa-Hen and Isang: Luzon will have stormy weather which may trigger landslides, flashfloods and big waves along its coasts. Typhoon Lando will have rains and occasional gusty winds. Prospero and Hanitchoon will experience mostly cloudy skies with possible rains.

Second FRONTPAGE

NO SURPRISE HERE

SWS: Millions bitten by pool bug

BILLIARDS, OR POOL, THE GAME PREVIOUSLY associated with the seamier side of society and which mothers used to warn their kids about, has now caromed into mainstream acceptability that a pool tournament to be held in Manila next week is expected to attract a Filipino television audience numbering in the tens of millions.

The conclusion was drawn from a survey by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) which confirmed that more than one in two adult Filipinos are likely to watch the 2006 World Pool Championship (WPC) on television when it is staged from Nov. 4 to 12. Data collated every in the Philippine International Convention Center for several hours daily.

Before noon is large part from the fact that previous champions of the prize-rich contest included local pool wizards Efren "Bata" Reyes, who topped the event in 1999 when it was first televised worldwide, and Filipino-Canadian Alex Pagulayan, who won cups in 2004. Millions of Filipino/ hearts were broken when another hero, Francisco "Django" Bustamante, let the crown slip when it was within his grasp in another event.

The SWS survey found that nine percent watch "always," nine percent watch "often," and 16 percent watch "sometimes"—a total 36 percent of adult Filipinos—subscribers to the final billiards on TV. This figure is an increase of five percentage points from the 31 percent registered in a similar survey conducted in August last year.

Billiards is more popular among men, who make up 18.7 million [71 percent] of those who watch the sport. Of those who watch billiards on TV, 17.7 million are from "class D," or people from the great mass of Filipinos.

The survey also found that "enthusiasts for playing pool are at a high," SWS said in a statement. Among men, 17 percent said they had played billiards within the previous month—higher than last year's 13 percent.

Enthusiasts in cities rarely across all socioeconomic classes, with 15 percent among classes ABC, eight percent among class D and 16 percent among class E. Those surveyed said they had played the game within the last 30 days.

The survey was conducted using face-to-face interviews of a national sample of 1,200 representative households in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. It had a margin of error of plus-minus three percentage points.

The survey was conducted pro bono by SWS for the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines, the national sports association which is behind bringing the 2006 WPC to Manila. The head of SWS, Mahar Mangahas, is known to be a billiards enthusiast.

The WPC is widely considered as the most prestigious international 9-ball tournament. It is expected to draw 128 players from at least 32 countries. Among the 116 pre-qualified players are 13 Filipino pool players. The 11 remaining slots will go to winners of a qualifying tournament to be held from Oct. 28 to Nov. 1. Invited players, 30 of them Filipinos, from 21 countries. *Zaire Pedroza, Inquirer Research*

Report says Guimaras folk still reeling from oil spill

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

JORDAN, GUIMARAS—RESIDENTS of Guimaras are reeling from unemployment and loss of income after the oil spill in August took away their livelihood and devastated the island economy, according to a multi-agency report that assessed the impact of the disaster.

The report hit were the residents of coastline villages engaged in fishing, gleaning (collecting fish on intertidal flats and reefs at low tide), beach resort operations, motorized banca operations, and salt-making and agriculture, said the 126-page report released on Oct. 26 by the Guimaras provincial government.

More than half, or 52 of the 98 barangays in the province, were directly affected by the oil spill and had oil sludges near their shores or in their coastal waters. The remaining 46 barangays were indirectly affected.

The report said 69,352 individuals, or 18 percent of the province's population of 151,394, were directly affected by the oil spill.

The towns of Nueva Valencia, Sibunag and San Lorenzo were heavily affected, while Jordan and Buenavista were less affected by the oil spill, although they also "felt the impact of the loss of market confidence on fishery products caught in Guimaras waters."

The report said 2,439 fishermen who previously earned an average of P239 to P500 per day were displaced due to the effects of the oil spill on their fish catch, seaweed and milkfish productions.

Some recorded no harvesting era, a temporary aftermarket, while others remained jobless. Some were hired by Petron Corp. in the cleanup operation.

Majority of the fish traders stopped their operations and laid off their workers since they did not have enough fish catch and could no longer receive their customers. The average daily sales for fish traders who continued their operations declined to P300 from P5,450.

The drop in fish catch and the fear of eating fish caught in the waters of Guimaras resulted in an increase in the number of animals slaughtered for consumption, the report said.

At least 185 mostly small businesses and 290 employees were affected in the towns of Nueva Valencia, Sibunag and San Lorenzo.

Sales of stores and eateries in the affected barangays and the income of those employed in these businesses also dropped because of the disaster, the report said.

Daily sales of eatery [and an] stores dropped by 30 percent to P500 from P962.76. They also cut the number of their workers by 11 percent. Those employed in these stores reported a drop in their average monthly incomes by 26 percent.

Operators of eateries had a 50 percent drop in average daily sales and reduced their average number of workers by 8.33 percent. The report said some eateries were able to maintain or increase their sales due to the presence of Petron workers engaged in the cleanup.

The team made some recommendations:

- Identify alternative livelihoods, including livestock production, backyard farming, handicraft-making and soap-making.
- Train and offer workshops to residents to enhance their knowledge and skills.
- Offer financial assistance or livelihood remuneration.
- Review the provincial agri-fisheries tourism plan to identify alternative tourism promotion strategies.

3 foreign firms submit bids to siphon bunker oil

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

ENCINADA CITY—THE INTERNATIONAL Oil Pollution Compensation Fund will discuss next week on the proposals of three foreign contractors to siphon the remaining bunker fuel oil still in the holds of the wrecked MT Solar 1 off the coast of Guimaras island.

Presidential Adviser for Western Visayas Rafael Coscolluela said the three companies that submitted bids to remove the oil from the hold 1 were Norwegian, Japanese and British firms that had equipment based in Singapore.

He said the IOPC did not want to disclose yet the names of the bidders.

The IOPC provides compensation for oil pollution damage caused by oil spills worldwide.

Coscolluela led the Philippine team that pushed for the funding to siphon the oil during the IOPC assembly and executive committee meeting in London on Monday.

The IOPC approved the funding for the removal of the oil, which is estimated to cost between P8 million and $30 million, Coscolluela said.

He said the IOPC executive committee will deliberate on the proposals of the three firms next week, choose one and sign a contract.

The detailed works program and modalities will be completed by December and actual siphoning work will start in January, he said.

The MT Solar 1 sank on Aug. 11 off the coast of Guimaras while transporting 2.1 million liters of bunker fuel owned by Petron Corp. This resulted in a massive oil spill that affected the coasts of Guimaras and Iloilo in what is considered the worst oil spill to hit the country.

The Philippine Coast Guard has estimated that 230,000 to 300,000 liters have been spilled into the sea. Most of the fuel has remained in the sunken vessel. It sealed barrels although the Coast Guard noted there was still a slight leak coming from the Solar 1.

Coscolluela and his team pointed out to the IOPC the need to siphon the oil because of the high frequency of seismic activity in the area which is on a fault line, the close proximity of the shorelines and the active fishing area affected.

It was also pointed out that the MT Solar 1 spill could affect an environmentally sensitive area, he said.

Coscolluela said the IOPC promised to give priority to the claims of some 9,000 fishermen who were displaced by the massive oil spill.

Also being processed are the claims of affected resort and fishpond owners, he said.

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Justice faced dictatorship, says senator

JUSTICE CONSUELO YNARES-SANTIAGO's "outing vote" in the Supreme Court's recent decision striking the petition for a people's initiative to change the Constitution may have surprised some of her colleagues, but not Sen. Jinkee Arroyo.

Unbeknown to many Santiago had shown early in her career as a judge that she could neither be cowed nor pressured even by the fiercest of dictators, President Ferdinand Marcos, Arroyo said in a statement.

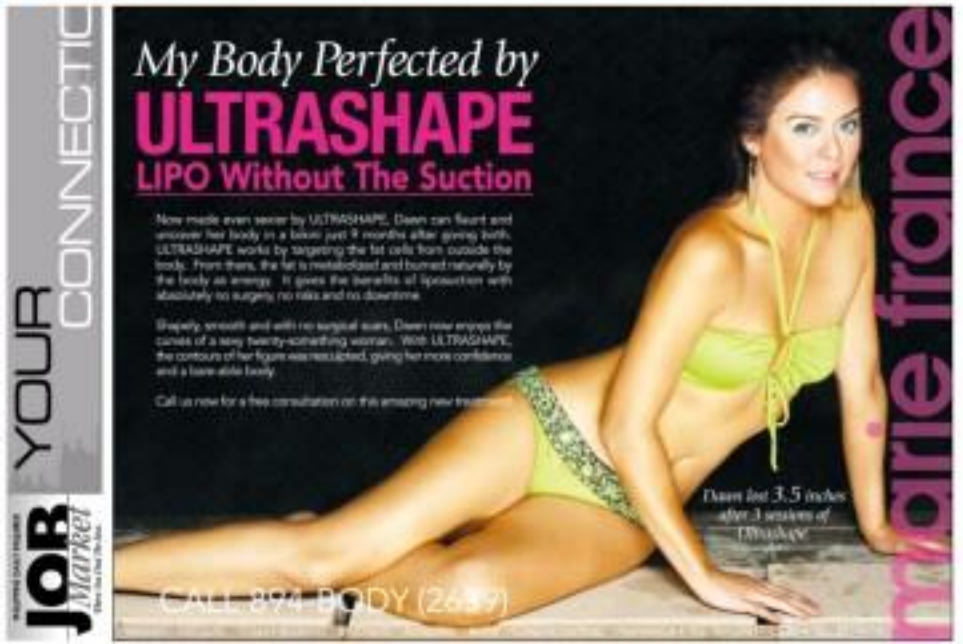
"If she did not yield to Marcos, how much more now?" he said.

As a Makati municipal judge, Santiago presided over the celebrated case filed by the Commission on Elections against then education secretary, Dr. Alejandro Roces, for allegedly violating a decree on compulsory voting in the early '80s.

After three hearings, she acquitted Roces.

"Early on, during the darkest days of martial law, the days of living dangerously, Justice Ynares, with dignity and aplomb, showed the sterling qualities of moral courage and stood against the formidable juggernaut of the dictatorship," Arroyo said. "She refused to be overawed as an exhibit of her distance."

Arroyo, along with lawyers from Angara and Abello and Bengzon Zarcal Collantes Ata Bautista, to dismiss the people's initiative petition filed by the Unlocal Local Initiatives of the Philippines and Sigaw ng Bayan on the grounds that it failed to comply with constitutional requirements. TJ Burgonio



Supertyphoon 'Paeng' whips Philippines

Front page A1

Ms Arroyo conveyed her approval in a text and phone patch exchange from Clinix with officials of the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) at around 7:30 last night.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III informed the President that the Department of the Interior and Local Government had instructed the Philippine National Police to prevent travelers from proceeding to the provinces affected by the typhoon.

Those going to the provinces for All Saints' Day will be allowed to further their Undas travels to the north and San Jose, Nueva Ecija, to the east, Duque said.

"Generally, no travel beyond those areas at this period in time. It's best to go back to their points of origin or wait it out wherever they are," he said.

Chief Supt. Raul Bacalzo, chief of the PNP's Traffic Management Group, said he had ordered all TMG regional units to set up checkpoints and stop all bus trips to destinations in northern Luzon and the Cagayan Valley.

In her first phone call to Duque as spokesperson officials, Ms. Arroyo asked those making the annual All Saints' Day trek to postpone travel to the provinces in the direct path of Paeng to avoid casualties.

"Don't venture out if there is no need for that. Let's follow the order of our officials and be on all guard," the President said in a message broadcast over nationwide radio.

All Saints' Day is a public holiday when millions troop to cemeteries to remember their dead. Some travel days in advance to provinces to pay homage to their dead.

Paeng, the 14th typhoon to hit the country this year, is stronger than "Milenyo" that devastated Metro Manila and other parts of Luzon last month. Milenyo (International codename: Xangsane) left more than 200 people dead and missing, and hundreds of thousands homeless.

Many parts of Luzon are still rebuilding after Milenyo on a month of destruction.

Moving west southwest at 19 kph, the eye of Paeng was located 120 km east of Casiguran, Aurora, or 210 km southeast of Tuguegarao, Cagayan, at 5 p.m. yesterday.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said Paeng would cut across northern Luzon, bringing strong winds and heavy rains, before blowing out to the South China Sea on Tuesday.

A power blackout hit Isabela at about 6 p.m. Two hours later, strong winds began buffeting the province, accompanied by bursts of rain.

In Cagayan, falling trees restricted open, including the northern areas Tuguegarao, as of late last night, police said.

"Paeng is a supertyphoon. It is category 4 in the United States, so it's really necessary for the people to be informed about this," Science Undersecretary Gavinlson Nantes told the President in the phone patch.

Officials ordered residents to abandon vulnerable coastal and mountainside areas and evacuate to safer shelter.

Anthony Golez, NDCC director, told the public to heed the President, saying that people from Metro Manila should let Paeng pass before heading out to the provinces.

"Undas one dead is part of our culture, but this is not an ordinary typhoon," he warned. "People could figure in many accidents if they don't listen."

Were after Paeng leaves, flooding and other "secondary hazards" could pose a danger to the public, according to Golez.

Flash floods, landslides

Signal No. 3 was raised over the Cagayan group of islands, Ilocos Norte, northern Zambales, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, northern Bulacan, southern Quezon and Polillo Island.

Signal No. 2 remained over the rest of Zambales, Bulacan, Quezon, Pampanga, Rizal and Camarines Norte.

Residents in areas under typhoon signals were alerted against possible flash floods and landslides, while those living along the eastern coast of Luzon were advised to be alert for storm surges or big waves.

Paeng, which entered the Philippine area of responsibility on Friday, gained strength as it passed over the Pacific Ocean, developing into a supertyphoon with a large eye circulation of about 300 km in the span of only three days.

"Paeng continues to gain strength and pose extreme danger to northern Luzon. All residents ... in the eastern coast of Cagayan and Isabela, including Aurora as well as the island province of Catanduanes, are strongly advised to take appropriate safety measures," Pagasa said in a statement.

"Those residing near rivers and mountains are also advised to take extreme precaution against possible flash floods and landslides," it said.

Weather branch chief Nathaniel Cruz said that unlike Milenyo, Paeng was not expected to cause massive damage as the nine-hour exit population of Isabela, a province known for its rice production.

"Milenyo passed through several areas, that's why it caused so much damage, but Paeng will hit northern Luzon where there is a smaller population and structures. So we're hoping that while it is stronger, it would not cause less damage," Cruz said in an interview.

Cruz said Paeng (he) would no longer in the country for long and should be over the sea by tomorrow afternoon.

The supertyphoon is expected to exit over the Bicol International area by Tuesday afternoon, but the rains will continue over the western side of the country.

Paeng is the first supertyphoon to hit the Philippines in three years, according to Pagasa. The last supertyphoon that entered the area was "Harurot" in 2003. Before that, there were "Loleng" in 1998 and "Seniang" in 1997.

Typhoon Signal No. 1 means that winds are swirling at 185 kph or more. Pagasa said:

- Crops and other large trees are expected to be uprooted.
- Kite and corn plantations may incur severe losses.
- Residential and institutional buildings made of mixed concrete hollowblocks may be severely damaged.
- Power distribution facilities and communication services could be severely disrupted and damaged.
- Overall, affected communities could incur very heavy damage. With reports from Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon, Ephraim Aguilar and Bobby Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon, and AP

US bishops . . .

Front page A1

accurate enough" about it in the parish.

The guidelines also say that gay men and lesbians have "no moral obligation to attempt" therapy, an apparent reference to therapy programs that claim to change gay people's sexual orientation.

The explanation for while "some have found therapy helpful," there is "no scientific consensus" either on therapy or the causes of homosexuality.

The Bishops will vote on the document — "Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care" — when the 138 Conference of Catholic Bishops meets on Nov. 13-16 in Baltimore. The documents, which could be amended, needs a two-thirds majority to pass.

Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli of Paterson, New Jersey, the chair of the bishops doctrine committee that wrote the new guidelines, acknowledged it was difficult to predict whether the document would pass but voiced optimism it would.

"It's a very sound document, a very clear document. My sense is that the bishops will readily endorse it," Serratelli said.

Gays chastised

Gay Catholic leaders who had read the draft, however, predicted that it would only further alienate gays and their families from the Church.

"There certainly is some lovely language that sounds welcoming in here," said Sam Ferraro, president of DignityUSA, an organization for gay Catholics.

"But essentially they're repeating all the spiritually violent things they've been saying about gay and lesbian Catholics for a decade of shoulder—that we are 'objectively disordered' and our relationships are inherently evil," Ferraro added.

The new document puts more emphasis on the Church's recent teaching about sexuality. It says that although having a "homosexual inclination" is not sinful, homosexual sex is a sin...as are premarital sex and adultery. The answer in all these situations is chastity.

The document says that although the Church realizes that homosexuality is "objectively disordered"...a teaching in the catechism that says homosexual acts violate the natural law, the Church is not saying that homosexual people themselves are disordered or "irrational morally defective by this inclination."

Such distinctions will provide little comfort to gay Catholics, according to Francis DeSiervo, executive director of the New Ways Ministry, a gay outreach group for Catholics based in Maryland. New York Times News Service

Correction

IN THE OCT. 28 ISSUE, a front-page story—"US poll responses can be hacked, experts show"—misstated the American university where computer science professor Avi Rubin teaches. Rubin teaches at Johns...not John...Hopkins University.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, October 30, 2006
30th Week in Ordinary Time
Memorial
Rom 8:28-30
Ps 119:91-92
Luke 13:10-17

Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath and a crippled woman was there. Se evil spirit had kept her bent for 18 years, so that she could not straighten up at all. On seeing her, Jesus called her over and said, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." Then he laid his hands upon her and immediately she was made straight and praised God.

But the ruler of the synagogue was indignant because Jesus had performed this healing on the Sabbath day and he said to the people, "There are six days in which to work; come on those days to be healed and not on the Sabbath."

But the Lord replied, "You hypocrites! Do not each of you untie his ox or his donkey on the Sabbath and lead it out of the barn to give it water? And here you have a daughter of Abraham whom Satan had bound for 18 years. Should she not be freed from her bonds on the Sabbath?"

When Jesus said this, all his opponents felt ashamed. But the people rejoiced at the many wonders that happened through him.

Commentary:

Be friends! Despite, initiate God and be a sacrifice on behalf of others as God has done for us in Jesus. Our lives are so be pure, single-hearted, faithful in our relationships, and sensitive, so that everything we do is reflected with a light. In what we proclaim as we see the children and listen.

A woman crippled by all-bended to Jesus' word just as Sabbath—it is truly worship of the God of Freedom and Holiness. But others are incensed, interpreting it as breaking the law to help someone. Jesus is furious; we break laws for our own convenience but not to set others free and relieve distress. He does worship God this way. She is a faithful and true daughter of Abraham. Jesus is not suffering her into... admit side of the necessary do we find ourselves in today?

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PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo adjusts her reading glasses as she speaks before students of Nanchang University in Jiangxi, China. KOKI HILVOSHINO PHOTO

China, Asean open talks today on free trade zone

NANNING, CHINA—CHINESE AND ASEAN leaders open a summit here today as the two sides lay the groundwork for an ambitious free trade zone that would encompass one-third of the world's population.

Officials say the two-day gathering will be a low-key affair with no major announcements expected, while trade ministers on the free trade zone, a priority for Southeast Asian nations still feeling some jitters over China's economic power.

Fears that the concern that was initially had that we might be overshadowed by China completely has been somewhat moderated," said Ong Keng Yong, secretary general of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Under a framework agreement on comprehensive partnership inked in 2002, China and Asean have since free trade in goods and all around tariff reductions since July 2005.

Talks on trade in services and investment are ongoing, and Asean officials say the parties are trying to finish negotiations on the first tranche of services to be liberalized by the end of 2006.

Free zone in 4 years

But the centerpiece of deepening relations is the plan to create the Asean-China Free Trade Area in the next four years.

The initiative aims to build a huge trading bloc with a free flow of goods, services and investments by 2010, encompassing a population of nearly two billion people and a gross domestic product of more than $2 trillion.

Including intra-Asean trade, China is now Southeast Asia's fourth-largest trading partner after the United States, Japan and the European Union. Asean is China's fourth-largest as well.

While two-way trade is rising, however—$130.3 billion in 2005 compared to $59.3 billion in 2000—Southeast Asia has watched China attract more and more foreign direct investment.

Orino is at pains to assure developing regional economies and downplay any threat from its economic might, but Asean is accelerating economic integration among members to increase competitiveness.

"Losing out in terms of foreign direct investment, that's not China's fault," said Rodolfo Severino, a former Asean secretary general who has worked with other veteran Southeast Asian politicians to boost relations.

Improve investment climate

"Asean has to do two things ... improve the national investment climate and regionally to accelerate economic integration," Severino said.

The leaders of the 10 Asean nations and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao will hold the closed-door summit today and they will hold a separate business and investment meeting tomorrow.

Wen will also meet individually with each of the Asean leaders. The two sides will also sign a partnership declaration looking at expanding relations in the years to come, officials said.

"We will avoid any big-bang approach (such as) fancy new initiatives with millions of dollars," said Asean's Ong. "We (will) try our best to commit both sides to do more in the political, economic and socio-cultural area."

Spratlys issue

One key political dispute monitoring several countries is over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.

Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam all claim full or partial sovereignty over the Spratlys, which are believed to contain vast oil and gas reserves. The isles have set off sporadic clashes for decades.

China in 2002 signed a nonaggression pact with Asean and in 2002, agreed with Asean that Asean to develop a code of conduct to resolve tensions over the Spratlys.

"We basically hope that with this impetus of the summit, we can go ahead," Ong said.

But leaders are likely to skirt around thornier political issues at the summit, including the place of democratic progress in Asean member Burma (Myanmar).

Burma's recalcitrance

Increasingly embarrassed by the recalcitrance of the military junta in Burma (Myanmar), Organized leaders of several Asean members have called on China and India to use their influence to pressure it into reforms.

But China, a major trading partner of Burma, has steadfastly maintained that it would not interfere in the internal affairs of Asean countries.

Ong said closed-door discussions would probably touch on Burma and other areas of concern, such as the Spratlys, but indicated the agenda were moving on.

"(The issues) will always be difficult, they will always be troublesome, because our positions differ," he said.

Asean comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. AFP

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Gloria vows to crush Reds within 3 years

From page A-1

plans, had vowed to crush the 37-year-old communist insurgency.

In June, she committed P2 billion in fund an intensified military campaign against the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. The funds are being spent to purchase arms and ammunition for the military as well as implement development projects in the insurgency-affected regions.

4 legacies

Crushing the communist insurgency and bringing peace and stability to the country were "converging to be (among) my three legacies," Ms Arroyo said.

Ms Pineda, the persons tried to reach the CPP spokesperson, Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, through his mobile phone to get his comment, but no one answered the calls.)

Another legacy that she hopes to leave behind when she steps down will be the development of the outer regions "so we can spread development all over the country and not only make it based in Imperial Manila," Ms Arroyo said.

She also said that she hoped to "keep the fire burning for fundamental political reforms through Charter change" for the rest of her term.

She said she might have had more regrets and disappointments in the past five years of her administration but added she was not one to dwell on them.

Secret to stamina

"People don't the secret to my stamina," Ms Arroyo said, as she noted that the first important achievement of her administration in the past five years was the implementation of much needed fiscal reforms.

These reforms allowed the government to balance the budget and also allow it some economic independence, she said.

The President mapped up yesterday her visits to the Chinese provinces of Fujian and Jiangxi.

At past time, Ms Arroyo and her delegation were heading to Nanning where the President, as chair of this year's leaders' summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), is set to co-host with China the two-day Asean-China commemorative summit that begins today.

The President said she will also concerns over North Korea's nuclear program and timing at the Asean-China summit as well as in her bilateral meeting with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao today.

She believed that by "working together on the North Korean issue, we can promote stability."

Solidarity during crisis

"I will include (North Korea) in my opening statement," she said. "Even if the Asean-China forum is basically an economic forum, due to a very good opportunity to discuss not only economic but security issues.

"When heads of state get together, it helps for the region together, it strengthens solidarity in times of crisis," she said.

Last week, the President said her government was offering its efforts as a venue for exploratory talks that could pave the way for Pyongyang to return to the six-party peace talks.

"China is the key to the North Korean issue," Ms Arroyo said in the interview with a Filipino columnist that was shared with reporters covering her China visit.

She pointed out that Pyongyang, which is under fire in the international community for its nuclear test, "is very careful in its words and proceedings with its nuclear program, was "economically dependent on China for trade."

"So that's one of the things that I will be consulting with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao about," she said.

Aside from China, the President is expected to hold bilateral talks with the leaders of Malaysia, Laos and Vietnam.

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Ruby Tower earthquake survivors …

Turn to page A3

later died. An undisclosed number of tenants, mostly Chinese Filipinos, were never found.

On the 1,200-square-meter property now stands a two-story building that houses a shop selling industrial pallets, fabric seats and heat insulation materials, a hardware, an eatery and a cultural club called Philippine Llanera Inc.

On the building's top floor is the Ruby Tower temple, built a couple of years after the Aug. 3, 1968, tragedy by the survivors who formed the Ruby Tower Memorial Foundation.

The shrine is "more than a memorial to the dead," some Ma. Cruz Sonnenjoy officials pointed out. It also serves as natural as of course employment tent to absorb the construction business and, probably, the real estate affairs in our judicial system, they said.

Most, if not all, city hall interviewed for this story no longer ask why it happened, but they will wonder: Will a take another Ruby Tower to shake those concerned out of their complacency?

A technical team formed by then Manila Mayor Antonio Villegas, the city fiscal's office and the Senate investigated the case.

Over a dozen charged

More than a dozen people were subsequently charged with multiple homicide and multiple physical injuries through criminal negligence.

They included Gina Gochero, manager of Solid Tower Inc. (STI) which owns the Ruby Tower, and STI directors Francisco Chiong, Pacifico Ibay, Alfonso Gochero and Lim Lim, architect Raymund Garcia, structural engineer Bonnelle Mesiapao, labor contractor Ethan Thaw; City Hall supervising engineer and concrete inspector Cesario Lindain and his assistant Julio Pilotero, and building inspector Rodolfo Angel de Dios.

The 14-man technical team commissioned by Villegas to investigate the Ruby Tower's collapse declared that the building was "a product of criminal-public combination of poor design, deficient construction and inadequate inspection and supervision."

The body's 52-page interim report also revealed that "no soil exploration on the building site had been conducted. There were also no dump tests for concrete as well as enough tests for reinforcing steel."

"The supposed concrete inspector was at the job site only for about one hour daily, delegating his duties to an undersized engineering graduate. There were deviations from the approved plans during the actual construction and there were attempts to substitute sizes of bolts and materials to maximize profit," said the report.

The result: The building collapsed "like a house of cards," according to newspaper accounts.

No one answered for crime

Like former Ruby Tower shrine caretaker Rodolfo Eaton, many city folk would not understand why no one has answered for the crime.

Because there's no more crime to speak of.

"They settled the case," caretaker Joe Gonzalez Tinsella Ily told the historian.

Solid Towers had earlier turned over the entire property to the survivors of the 1968 tragedy. "The survivors, represented by the foundation, now own this place," Ily said.

According to Ily, members of the foundation usually gather not talk about anything unrelated with the accident.

"It is like a closed book to them," said Ily, who also helps run Caspar Enterprise, the industrial materials shop on the ground floor.

Ily herself lost at least 10 of her former schoolmates in Manado. She was 20 and a commerce sophomore at the University of Santo Tomas when the killer quake struck.

"It's unbelievable how the people remains padlocked the whole year round, even on 40 Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. Apparently those who survived the tragedy wanted to be left only with the cherished memories of their lost loved ones," said Ily.

Its sad many of the survivors had migrated to Canada and the United States.

Susie and Shirley

Among them were Susie Wong Chan, then aged 9 and a third grader at St. Stephen's School, and her cousin Shirley Wong Chan, then 12, whose survival beneath the rubble for more than 125 hours was considered nothing short of a miracle.

Susie was trapped in the concrete for the Aug. 2 anniversary, and in typical Chinese tradition join fellow survivors in offering food, flowers and, of course, prayers for their departed loved ones, Ily said.

For the survivors, the entire block is hallowed ground.

The survivor, Ily said, "has not changed much. The hall is still festooned with the same black and white pictures of about 100 of the quake victims. A cleaning woman drops by at least once a month."

Then President Ferdinand Marcos declared a state of national emergency after the quake, the weather bureau said, that hit Manila at 9:23 a.m. and rolled through an 800-kilometer stretch from Aparri in Cagayan to Surigao in 33 seconds.

More than 140 aftershocks were felt within a 15-hour period after the major quake. Fires triggered by the tremor hit the South Harbor and Sta. Ana fishing areas; others, the Daily Mirror newspaper reported.

'A giant foot stamped on it'

"Crumpled as if a giant foot had stamped on it, the Ruby Tower was a mass of ruined steel and concrete with an estimated 600 to 800 occupants still trapped inside," the daily said.

The late Manila Times publisher Joaquin "Chino" Roces was "among the first to arrive at the disaster area to help rescue the victims." Marcos and then First Lady Imelda Marcos also came, accompanied by Lupa Cruz Benjamin Bermudez.

The Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other private groups actively took part in the rescue efforts. One of its leaders, the late banker and philanthropist Ralph Nubla Sr., was later conferred by Marcos the Presidential Merit Award for "humanitarian services rendered during the Ruby Tower disaster."

Several gold bars recovered from the collapsed building were turned over to the federation.

Disaster management

When rescue operations ended on Aug. 9, 1968, the official death toll stood at 268. Many of the dead were never identified.

Maj. Gen. Gaudencio Tobias, then Armed Forces vice chief of staff and head of the Ruby Tower rescue efforts, declared that disaster labor management was necessary "to right from mapped out their own or with the help of their neighbors shortly after the building collapsed."

When the Ruby Tower collapsed in 1968, the government's lack of interest in disaster management was manifest everywhere. Little that year, the Marcos administration put up the National Committee on Disaster Operation which shortly afterward manifested its function to the newly-created Office of Civil Defense.

Next came the National Disaster Control Center, the forerunner of the National Disaster Coordinating Council, the highest policy-making body on disaster in the country.

Boy Scouts group now accepting girls

From page A1

aspiring girls aged between 12 and 17 into the BSP Senior Scout Section.

Happened that middle because the Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP) is now amused.

The GSP headed by acting national president Susan S. Lucero, passed a resolution on Oct. 26 strongly objecting to the BSP move.

The GSP ever narrow Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, the BSP national president, asking him for the immediate withdrawal of the BSP resolution and memorandum circular.

"Mr. President, the girls register with us because they want to be girl scouts and not boy scouts," Lucero said in her letter to Binay dated Oct. 26.

Binay, who presided over a morning presentday of ceremony of the national executive board at the BSP Camp in Capitol Hills, Cebu City, was not available to give his side.

But the GSP resolution and Lucero's letter were discussed at the NEB meeting, according to BSP Cebu Council chair Herman Rivera.

Rivera said the national executive board decided on its last to consolidate headed by Dinah Jaime Ednalin, past BSP national president and chair of the BSP public relations committee, to hold a dialogue with the GSP officials.

Opposition

Sarmiento himself expressed opposition to the BSP recruitment of girls, saying that the BSP itself was facing difficulties implementing programs for boys.

Cebu City Vice Mayor Michael Rama, a member of the board of the BSP Cebu Council, also opposed the move, which was embodied in a resolution approved by the council on Oct. 24.

Rama said rewarding programs were working well, with boys belonging to the BSP and girls under the GSP.

"So why change that? It is like repairing an undamaged thing," he said.

Rama believed that there was no urgency or necessity in opening the BSP to girls.

"We have been growing up with boy scouts and girl scouts being separate. Besides, how can you become a boy scout if you are girl?" Rama said.

Based on documents provided to reporters here by GSP national treasurer Celsina Veneracion, the BSP national executive board approved a resolution on Aug. 26 accepting girls aged between 12 and 17 into the Senior Scout Section.

Another document showed that BSP secretary general J. Abad C. Bengzon issued Memorandum No. 47 in September directing all the regional scout directors, council executives and district executives in charge to implement the BSP board resolution.

Pangilinan also attached to the memorandum the implementing guidelines.

Four reasons

Based on the memorandum signed by Bengzon, the BSP national executive board gave four reasons for wanting to recruit girls.

The establishment of girls in largely scouts on "provide equal opportunities and equal partnership [to] young people, both within scouting and in allied local, national and international community," the board said.

Other reasons:

- Provide opportunities to help young people develop their potential, respect their individual differences, and go beyond traditional gender roles.
- Contribute to the development of the Filipino youth by helping build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in Philippine society.
- Pursue the World Organization of Scout Movement's policy encouraging female membership in the scouts program.

Under the implementing guidelines, girls who are in high school can become members of the Senior Scouting Program but they have to register here with the Girl Scouts of the Philippines and pay the GSP fees. After that, they may register with the BSP.

The girls should also get parental or guardian consent before they can be accepted into the BSP.

The GSP said the BSP resolution and its implementing guidelines were in conflict with the GSP charter that has its own standards, rules and regulations for its members.

Prevent confusion

The BSP should immediately disregard National Office Memorandum No. 47 "to prevent confusion among girls, parents and supporters of GSP and the public in general," the GSP said.

Aurora Quezon who were furnished a copy of the GSP resolution were President Macapagal-Arroyo (the Chief Girl Scout), Binay, the Department of Education and the Girl Scouts of Canada.

Lucero noted that while the GSP national president was a member of the BSP National Executive Board, she or the GSP did not receive any notice for the Aug. 26 meeting where the BSP approved the plan.

Astounded

GSP officials were "astounded" by the BSP's "clear disregard" of their rights as a national organization and member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, according to Lucero.

She said she need to register first with the GSP before registering with the BSP amounted to misleading the girls, their parents and the public.

Bengzon said he was informed in yesterday's meeting that the move was not compulsory.

Aspiring girls can register first with the GSP then remain to discourage them from joining the BSP, according to him.

He said his organization opposed its desire as girls become several girls had wanted to join the BSP because they did not like the GSP program.

Some girls found the GSP program "too girly," according to Bengzon.

He said the challenge now was for the GSP to improve its program so that girls would not be interested in joining the BSP.

Militant lawmaker prefers House to hospital detention

By Philip C. Tubeza

DETAINED MILITANT LAWMAKER SEN Crispin Beltran will formally ask the Supreme Court today to order his release to the custody of the House of Representatives, his chief of staff said yesterday.

Jun Alfaro Silverio said Beltran's lawyers, led by lawyer Romeo Capulong, would file a motion for certiorari and ask the high tribunal to issue a temporary restraining order (TRO) against the Makati court trying Beltran on rebellion charges.

"This is an urgent petition calling on the Supreme Court to step into the branch and impose a TRO on the senate detainee being held down by the Makati Regional Trial Court on the case," Silverio said.

"With a TRO on the court's decisions, we can move forward and [order legislators (sic)] Ka Bel would be able to attend the sessions of Congress pending the continuing investigation of his case," the said.

Yet also seek to have Ka Bel transferred to the House of Representatives and there, in the meantime, be placed under the protection of the congressional leadership, Silverio said.

Beltran, who is under police custody at the Philippine Heart Center, will also ask the Supreme Court to issue a temporary restraining order and a writ of preliminary injunction to restrain the trial court and the Department of Justice from proceeding with the rebellion case against him.

Silverio said Beltran had been "unjustly incarcerated for eight months" after he was accused of being involved in a failed coup attempt in February.

"Ka Bel's accusers have been unable to present tangible proof that he was plotting with the dispossessed members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines or with leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines in the time of the false E-[communications earlier this year," the said.

"Since 2001 up to the time he was arrested, Ka Bel has been a member of the House of Representatives most deserving of the adjective 'honorable' and performed his tasks and duties as a representative of the poor and marginalized sectors," the said.

Silverio said the charges against Beltran were "all intended to deny the Filipino people a more effective legislator and better parliamentarian."

DAR orders part of Yulo estate returned to tillers

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM has annulled the conversion order covering a portion of the Yael Yulo estate in Laguna to pave the way for its return to the Cunjuanhon Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

Citing the property owners' failure to develop the land after it was converted to residential use, the DAR partially revoked the 1999 conversion order on the 216.73 hectares in the Yulo estate in Cavinburg, Laguna.

In an order he signed in September, Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman granted the petition of Kasama sa Cavinburg Inc., a group of farmers on the estate, and ordered the return of 88.73 ha of the 216.73 ha to CARP coverage.

"In view of the clear failure of the Cavinburg Sugar Estate to convert and develop a portion of the subject landholdings, which allegedly remain to be agricultural, this office finds substantial basis to grant the instant petition," Pangandaman said in the order dated Sept. 20 but which the farmers received only recently.

The DAR also ordered the provincial agrarian reform officer (Pard) and the municipal agrarian reform officer (Mard) to determine the true ownership of the 66 ha portion, given that a separate corporation was set up to carry out the conversion.

The 1999 conversion order specifically directed the Laguna Estates Development Corp., the company created by the Yulos to oversee the conversion of the 216.73 ha, to develop the landholding within two years from receipt of the conversion order.

"It has been 27 years and the site has remained undeveloped," said Kasambahan Cavinburg president Belinda Egida.

Furthermore, the Mard is directed to advise the farmers beneficiaries not to enter the landholdings until proper documentation and legal proceedings have been completed," Pangandaman said in the order.

The estate has 15 days from Dec. 2 to file its opposition or take other legal action. But in part, Kasambahan Cavinburg said it was working to remove the 66-ha would return to CARP coverage. Blanche S. Rivera

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GMA aide confirms Cabinet split but no revamp

From page A1

The strongly-worded court ruling against the people's initiative was penned by Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, also one of the firm's founding partners.

Nothing wrong

A Malacañang official earlier told the Inquirer that the scathing Supreme Court decision indicated a falling out between the Palace and "The Firm."

Claudio confirmed that Cruz had been vocal in his opposition to the Sigma Ching Initiative, bringing it up with him and other Cabinet officials and even with the President herself. He said Cruz "didn't think it would work" or gain Supreme Court backing.

"It made tension within the Cabinet, and with me, Secretary Cruz did speak about his disagreement with PI (people's initiative) as a method for amending the Constitution," Claudio said.

Claudio confirmed that Cruz had been vocal in his opposition to the Sigma Ching Initiative, bringing it up with him and other Cabinet officials and even with the President herself. He said Cruz "didn't think it would work" or gain Supreme Court backing.

"It made tension within the Cabinet, and with me, Secretary Cruz did speak about his disagreement with PI (people's initiative) as a method for amending the Constitution," Claudio said.

"Nothing wrong with that, I guess. His advice and candidness, as long as they are confined to the Cabinet, are valued as always," Claudio said.

Cruz defended

Claudio immediately added: "I am not aware of any instance where he publicly campaigned against PI, necessary on the position taken by the President, nor tried to subvert its chances of success, particularly in the SC. If he did, that's a different thing."

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the contrary position that Cruz had taken on the people's initiative did not mean he should be dropped from the Cabinet.

"I don't think it's a time to demote Secretary Cruz. Why? Well, I think he's doing his job well," Gonzalez said in a phone interview.

He also said Cruz's job was distinct from the Charter change issue.

"Obviously, he has a different view on the people's initiative, but that does not necessarily mean a falling out with the President. His job as secretary of justice has nothing to do with Cha-cha," he said.

Cha-cha still rolling

In any case, Gonzalez said, any change in the Cabinet lineup was a matter that the President alone can decide.

Gonzalez also said he had not seen any signs of a rift among Cabinet members because of opposing opinions about the people's initiative.

As for Cruz's reported statement that some colleagues wanted him out, Gonzalez said he had no idea to whom Cruz was referring, and added that the latter could have been the target of intrigue.

Con-ass pushed in House

TIME MAY BE SLIPPING AWAY but there is no turning back from Cha-cha.

Administration lawmakers made that clear yesterday as they discussed the rules of the House of Representatives to abandon its plan to push through with a constituent assembly and amend the Constitution.

Deputy Speaker Gerry Salapuddin and Rep. Rodolfo Bonoan (Lakas, Siquijor-City), vice chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, said the House would not be swayed by critics' claims that Charter change (Cha-cha) was dead.

Salapuddin said a caucus called by Speaker Jose de Venecia for next week would be crucial for the lawmakers in planning their strategy on convening a constituent assembly and proposing Charter amendments even without the Senate's participation.

"We may call the double session in the [Commission on Elections] and [Supreme Court's] temporary setback, but certainly nobody loses a case," he said.

Salapuddin said the Cha-cha proponents wanted to "fine-tune the process because we believe that time is not on our side."

He added: "To say that we should scrap con-ass now is to turn our backs on our constituents who want Cha-cha for the betterment of our economy."

Bonoan said opposition calls for the House to give up the idea of a constituent assembly "is all scare-duck soup."

"This is a crucial moment for Cha-cha and we, in the House, will show solidarity in pushing con-ass to dispel the negativism of anti-Cha-cha groups," Bonoan said. —Philip C. Salvosa

Malacañang made it clear yesterday it had not given up on Cha-cha.

SC reversal

Claudio indicated the Palace was banking on the Supreme Court reversing itself or its Congress convening itself into a constituent assembly to validate the goal of changing the country's form of government to a parliamentary from the presidential system.

"The final fate of Charter change through a people's initiative or constituent assembly will probably be determined by the [nine Congress] guns on Christmas recess," Claudio said.

Ms. Arroyo's allies in the House of Representatives have said they plan to convene a constituent assembly with or without the participation of the Senate, and that convening the constituent assembly will be the chamber's first agenda when it resumes sessions on Nov. 6.

Claudio said Malacañang remained confident about the chances of Ifugao ng Bayan and Ulap entering a reconsideration of the high court's decision.

Election plans on hold

"The narrow defeat of the people's initiative in the SC does not diminish the urgency and righteousness of political reforms through Charter change," Claudio said.

Claudio said the administration was putting on hold preparations for the holding of its senatorial and local slates for the May 2007 elections in the hope that the next elections would be for synchronized.

"We don't want to talk about [the senatorial slate] because even at this point, we are still adamant and hopeful about the shift in the parliamentary system such that the next elections would be for the parliament and elections for Senator," Claudio said in a phone interview.

He said that if the constitutional and legal hurdles to the people's initiative or a constituent assembly were not resolved by the Christmas break, the administration would make "formal, open and aggressive preparations for the elections."

Congress goes on recess on Dec. 22.

Wish for revenge

"We are confident about being able to put up a strong senatorial lineup from the ranks of the loyalists and local executives," Claudio said.

"We do not want to be humiliated or openly thrown such a process because we have not given up on the plan for the establishment of a parliament."

He added: "In the event of an election, the administration will have a detailed and complete lineup having a formidable campaign machinery nationwide. We will be able to field candidates for all 17,000 local positions."

Claudio said the administration had a major advantage in the elections because 75 percent of all incumbent congressmen and local officials belonged to the administration coalition.

"You can be sure that many of them will exact revenge against opposition candidates in the [Senate]," Inquirer Chu Bee, he said. With a report from Ladlad Galacerán

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SC justices subordinate private gratitude to public interest

From page A1

the court-versus drive was stalled in the Supreme Court as an arena of confrontation outside the political arena.

Thus, the petitions in the court inevitably acquired the complexion of a case of political opponents of an unpopular president closely identified with the President. This was the circumstance and public pressure against which the court had to make a decision.

On the face of its decision, there was nothing to suggest that this court had allowed this extraneous factor to influence its decision and compromise its independence.

Crushing blow

The handsome of the language is not there the main issue nor the defining element of the decision, and should not be allowed to be used to mute the crushing significance.

This declaration not only delivered the devastating blow to the people's initiative movement. More important, it came as a powerful rebuff to the project of Ms. Arroyo for constitutional reform, indicated either for making the political system more responsive to the challenges of modern economic development and low prone to gridlock, as for the narrower aim of ensuring the longevity of her regime.

The strong words of the majority decision, as well as the 8-7 vote, deflated the petitioners' false representation of a honorable vote.

Mr. Arroyo's chief of staff, Michael Defensor, expressed the Presidency's disappointment, saying she was "really perplexed" that three justices who had appointed to the Supreme Court "would lose out to have the harshest opinions."

Defensor was apparently referring to Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, who penned the majority opinion in scathing language.

In dismissing the people's initiative petition of Sigma ng Bayan and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (referred to as the Lambino group in the petition), the decision said that it was void and unconstitutional because "it clearly fails to comply with the requirement of Section 2, Article XVII of the Constitution that the initiative must be directly proposed by the people through initiative upon a petition."

Court warning

In an unmistakable rebuff of the initiative project, which the Lambino group admitted was "unconditional support to GMA the upon of the proposal by the constitutional change, the court warned.

"No one can trivialize the Constitution by cavalierly amending or revising it in blatant violation of the clearly specified modes of amendment and revision laid down by the Constitution itself.

"To allow such change is the fundamental law is to set adrift the Constitution to unchecked waters, to be tossed and turned by every dominant political group of the day. If this court allows today a cavalier change to the Constitution outside the constitutionally prescribed modes, tomorrow the new dominant political group that comes will demand its own set of changes in the same cavalier and unconstitutional fashion.

A revolving door constitution does not augur well for the rule of law in this country."

Guardian of the Constitution

The court pointed out that no amount of signatures, not even the 6.3 million signatures collected by the Lambino group, can change the Constitution contrary to the specific modes that the people, in their sovereign capacity, prescribed when they ratified the Constitution.

"The alternative is an extraconstitutional change, which means subverting the people's sovereign will and dismantling the Constitution," the decision said.

"This is one act the court cannot and should not and should never do," as the "ultimate guardian of the Constitution."

Falling out

Apparently, administration supporters did not take this lofty declaration on its face.

Some administration officials tried to trivialize the decision by insinuating the strong language could have stemmed from a "falling out" between the President and the Villanueva & Aragon's law firm, where Justice Carpio was a senior partner before his appointment to the Supreme Court.

It appears the President could not quite accept the fact that, first, 10 of the 15 justices of the court that she appointed to her cabinet, and, second, Carpio had been a trusted legal and political lieutenant since 2001 when she took over Malacañang from deposed President Joseph Estrada; and, third, both Carpio and Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban were actively involved in the decision to appoint Florida Hotilo Jr. and the court to swear in then Vice President Arroyo following the collapse of the Estrada administration.

Public interest over gratitude

Impressions springing from those facts should be expected, outright because they are substantial, irrelevant and ignore the fact that the issues of 2001 and those surrounding the people's initiative are different.

If at all, the opinions of Carpio, Panganiban, Ynares-Santiago and Austria-Martinez and some of their other appointees of the President underline the independence of the individual justices.

Their positions highlight the lesson that it is dangerous to take for granted the issues of independence of the justices.

The decision demonstrates the higher values many vested in placing public interest above loyalty to the appointing power.

They subordinated personal gratitude to public interest.

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TUCP: Win by Democrats in US polls to benefit RP

By Lelia B. Salcedo
THE OUTCOME OF NEXT MONTH'S congressional elections in the United States could affect the labor situation in the Philippines, according to the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines.

Should the Democratic Party dominate the Nov. 7 polls, the Philippines could benefit in terms of more investments and jobs because of the party's plan to raise the US minimum wage, said TUCP secretary general Democrito Herrera.

Recent US surveys indicate the Democrats are leading the Republicans, whose chances at the polls have dimmed after a series of scandals.

All 435 seats in the US House of Representatives and 33 of the 100 seats in the Senate will be up for grabs in the Nov. 7 elections.

"The Democrats have already vowed they will raise the federal minimum wage once they serve control of Congress. This will drive American companies to accelerate the transfer of more jobs to lower-cost locations such as the Philippines," Herrera said in a statement.

The current federal minimum wage in the US is $5.15 per hour, and the Democrats want to raise this to at least $7.25 per hour, according to the TUCP. It said this would mean automatic increases in all but four US states where the hourly basic wage is already $7.25 or higher.

Herrera also said the additional jobs as a result of the higher US minimum wage would come not only from business process outsourcing, which would contribute to the Philippines' booming call center industry, but also from investments in the semiconductor and electronics industry.

The TUCP said the business process outsourcing industry and the export-driven shipmakers had contributed much to the growth of the Philippine economy.

Quoting the Business Processing Association of the Philippines, it said industry-accredited outsourcing services were projected to employ up to 1,002,000 Filipinos by 2010.

Among the US-based outsourcing providers already established in the Philippines are IBM Corp., Accenture Ltd., Affiliated Computer Services Inc., Convergys Corp., TeleTech Holdings Inc., NCO Group Inc., Sykes Enterprises Inc., ICT Group Inc., IBTEL Corp., Peoplesupport Inc., APAC Customer Services Inc. and Intelserand Global Services Inc.

On the other hand, the TUCP said the Philippines' semiconductor and electronics industry had so far generated 36,167 new jobs this year, mainly in expansion projects.

The creation of new jobs was boosted by the global demand for mobile phones, high-definition TVs, computers and digital video players, it said.

The TUCP said several US-based chipmakers already had Philippine operations. These included Intel Corp., Texas Instruments Inc., National Semiconductor Corp., Fairchild Semiconductor International Co. and AMIS Holdings Inc.

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No bias against new nurses, med tours chief vows

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHO'D BE WILLING TO EMPLOY NURSES who passed last June's controversial board exams?

The head of the country's budding medical tourism program yesterday said the new nurses were welcome in the program's affiliated hospitals.

"There won't be any discrimination," Health Undersecretary Jaime del Rosario told the business Saturday night.

Del Rosario, the government's point person in the new, multimillion-peso medical tourism industry said there would be more opportunities for these passers to work in medical tourism-affiliated hospitals, once the program expands to the provinces next year.

So far, the program includes prominent hospitals like St. Luke's Medical Center, Asian Hospital, Medical City, Makati Medical Center, Capitol Medical Center, Long Center, Philippine Heart Center, National Kidney and Transplant Institute, Philippine Children's Medical Center and East Avenue Medical Center.

The plan will soon include top government hospitals in Central Luzon, Baguio, Cebu, Bohol and Davao, Del Rosario said.

He noted that medical tourists "hospitals would still require some top supplements to meet certain criteria, like board exam rating, training and experience.

"One thing we can assure the June passers is that they would be given equal opportunities," he said.

Results the 52% gave the go-signal for the undertaking of more than 15,000 successful nursing examinees last week, a number of June passers had complained about some hospitals' refusal to even consider their applications.

Del Rosario said government hospitals in the provinces would provide good training for the new nurses.

He said these hospitals would be attractive to foreign patients because they offer surgical procedures at lower cost and they are located near tourist destinations.

So far, hospitals in Bicol, Cebu and Davao are offering difficult procedures such as coronary artery bypass graft, which costs P500,000 or half the cost of having it done abroad.

Hospitals in Davao and Cebu also offer kidney transplantation at P3 million. Elsewhere, the complicated procedure could cost about P7 million, Del Rosario said.

Illegal recruitment cases up 36%—POEA

SOME ILLNESSES ARE STILL BORN EVERY minute.

The number of illegal recruitment cases rose by more than a third during the first nine months of the year, according to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

The POEA said a total of 1,422 cases related to illegal recruitment were filed with the agency from January to September this year, or 36 percent higher than the 1,046 recorded in the same period last 2005.

Former POEA Administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz said the agency's dismissive rate of illegal recruitment cases stood at 21 percent as of September 2006, up by eight percent from 13 percent in the same period last year.

Of the 1,422 cases, the POEA facilitated the filing of 236 cases in court for preliminary investigation while 27 were administrative closed.

Baldoz, however, said the rise in the number of illegal recruitment cases did not necessarily reflect the national situation. She said complainants on illegal recruitment were also dealt with by the police, National Bureau of Investigation and other law-enforcement agencies.

Baldoz admitted the POEA had a hard time pacifying illegal recruiters behind bars because many of the victims usually opted not to lodge a court case or dismissed from one already filed since they got their money back.

She said that, however, the POEA would be giving more teeth in curbing illegal recruitment following an understanding between the labor department and the Commission on Filipino Overseas.

Aurora Aning

STRONG TIES. President Macapagal-Arroyo and Jiangxi Gov. Huang Zhiquan (right) exchange pleasantries during her visit to Nanchang University in Jiangxi, China, on Saturday.

UNIVERSITY VISIT. President Arroyo receives a token of appreciation from an unidentified Nanchang University official after she addressed the university's students on the coming Asian-China summit. With them are Governor Zhiquan (right) and Li Jinjun (left). NONOY LACSON/PCIJ

Airport X-ray machine sees all

THE WOMAN TRAVELLER'S anxiety apparently was no match for an airport X-ray machine and the security personnel manning it.

Police yesterday arrested Yasmin Abdulla, 31, for alleged possession of some 500 grams of suspected methamphetamine hydrochloride, better known as shabu.

The prohibited drugs were in 10 small plastic sachets that had been sewn into the lining of Abdulla's luggage. They were discovered during the X-ray screening process at the Manila Domestic Airport at noon yesterday, a police report said.

According to the report, an airport security officer noticed suspicious images as Abdulla's blue-green trolley bag passed through the X-ray machine at the airport's initial security check station.

An officer of the police Aviation Security Group (ASG) inspected the bag and found the sachets in its lining. NIKKO DIZON

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Peak season, US audit reasons for long lines at Naia

By Nikko Dizon

THE PEAK TRAVEL SEASON PLUS a security audit equate long queues at the airport.

In the past few days, lines at the check-in counters at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) have been unusually long, apparently inducing two things: The peak season for travel late August and the US Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is conducting its annual security audit.

"Audits last any TSA life because the TSA is here," two airport security personnel, an Naia 1 supervisor whom asked separately by the Inquirer on Friday, why there were long lines at the entrance to the departure and arrival areas.

The TSA began its monthlong audit on Oct. 20 and is expected to wrap it up on Nov. 2.

Armed/trained and uniformed airport security officers diligently inspected each piece of luggage.

Every passenger entering the airport terminal had to undergo a thorough frisking from head to toe, front and back.

Security guards also made sure only two to three persons were lined up at the X-ray machine by the employee entrance at Naia 1 before letting the next person enter through the sliding doors.

With the onset of the peak season for travel, security personnel screened more than the usual number of passengers.

Lines before the airlines' check-in counters snaked through the Naia 1 departure area, especially at noon yesterday.

"It's not just because the TSA is here, you have to remember it's the peak season now," an aviation security official said.

But a source who requested anonymity said queues appear whenever the TSA is doing its audit.

"It's like when the cat is away, the mouse will play. That's why we feel the tightening of security at the Naia when the TSA is here because we don't want to fail their assessment," the source said.

A thumbs-down from the TSA would mean that the US might issue a travel advisory against the Philippines, the source said.

Americans top tourist arrivals to RP to date

THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM's "bulilitawan" program to North America appears to be paying off after United States citizens topped the list of foreign tourist arrivals through the third quarter of the year.

A DOT report said 424,494 Americans visited the Philippines from January to September, accounting for more than a fifth of total tourist arrivals.

In the middle of the year, the DOT launched the Grand Pinoy Homecoming Year to encourage Filipino-Americans, Americans of Filipino descent and their relatives and friends to visit the country and check out its tourist destinations.

The program was also launched in Canada, which placed ninth in the list. Some 54,511 Canadians visited the Philippines, a 9.6 percent increase over the same period last year.

Other arrivals were Filipinos permanently residing overseas but who still held Philippine passports, with 307,972 of them visiting the motherland, a 21.6 percent increase over last year.

Total foreign arrivals for the first nine months of the year posted at 1,980,780, which was 9.4 percent more than the 1,907,491 that came in the same period last year.

South Korea, with 406,486 visitors, came in second in terms of visitor volume, its 16.4-percent growth rate, however, was higher than the UK's 11 percent.

The East Asian region continued to be the country's top source of foreign visitors. After South Koreans, Japanese tourists numbered 328,235, Chinese 98,136, Taiwanese 47,671 and Hong Kong-ites 78,604, topping the DOT's roster of 10 top markets.

Also on the list were Australia, Singapore, Canada and the United Kingdom. Arnette Ateng

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OPINION

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Killing the SC, softly

THOSE WHOM THE GODS BY THE PASIG RIVER wish to destroy, they first call political. Consider the circular words offered by Interim Senior Gov. Ben Evardone to explain last week's 8-7 vote in the Supreme Court. The spokesman of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines, the people's initiative petitioners closely identified with the Arroyo administration, insinuated, without taking responsibility for his allegation, that Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban was running for the Senate. "We have heard he might run and I will not be surprised if he will be picked up by the opposition," he told reporters traveling with President Macapagal-Arroyo in China.

EDITORIAL

The object of his jet, of course, was the rejected swing vote in the close decision; as Chief Justice, Panganiban enjoys the privilege of voting last. The objective of Evardone's unfriendly fire was even more obvious: he wanted to taint the decision that junked the people's initiative, by baselessly ascribing partisan, political motives to those who voted against the bid.

Other officials even more closely identified with the President have also issued statements that assume the decision is politically tainted.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez confirmed rumors about a reported rift between some members of the Cabinet and the President's favorite law firm, when he claimed that "there's a big law firm that is cheering ... that is deformed Malacañang." Secretary Michael Defensor, the President's chief of staff, said the Chief Executive was "really perplexed" that her appointees to the high court "would turn out to have the harshest opinions."

These two statements—and President's cabinet insinuation—assume that Supreme Court justices are merely politicians in robes, policymakers who base their decisions not on the great principle of "facts and the law" but on the give-and-take of politics. These statements are not—as perhaps these three gabby politicians would like to think—an expression of realpolitik: they are a dangerous misinterpretation of the role the courts play in democracy.

Gonzalez assumes that some kind of insidious lobbying takes place outside of the Supreme Court's rather elaborate and potentially deliberative process; Defensor assumes that appointments to the high court are essentially irrevocably political, with appointees expected to favor the appointing powers. They are both wrong, and dangerously so.

By constitutional design, the judiciary is insulated from politics; it is the one branch of government that is expected in many decisions based not on public opinion or political considerations—the province of the legislature and the executive—but on facts and the law.

Two other misinterpretations are also dangerously mistaken.

It is wrong to read the latest decision as the work of eight justices outvoting seven judges who weren't (as some anti-Charter change advocates have unfairly suggested). We are aloof only as evidence that any of the 15 justices lack a robust sense of patriotism; in fact, reading some of the dissenting opinions, we readily find that the same civic virtues, the same deep sense of public service, animated the positions of the justices who dissented. We may not agree, for instance, with some of Senior Associate Justice Reynato Puno's conclusions, such as the notion that the proposed constitutional amendments, because they involve only one of the three "sets of provisions" in unicameral-making, do not count as substantial changes; but who can fail to be convinced by the long study and sense of citizenship that went into his opinion?

It is also wrong to assume (as Sigur ng Bayan's Raul Lambino suggested) that because the Supreme Court is not a trier of facts it should close its eyes to reality. Justice's blindfold is a symbol of impartiality; it is not a license for those who come before the court to play fast and loose with the facts.

These misinterpretations—that the high court's deliberative process is obviously political, that last week's vote was a defining exercise in partisan, that the Supreme Court overstepped its constitutional boundaries when it takes judicial cognizance of plain reality—all undermine the high court's place in our democratic project. Of the three, politicization is the worst offender, because it subverts the judiciary's very nature—not in one swoop, but slowly, in small doses of political poison.

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Ghosts, ghouls and gremlins for Halloween

TOMORROW BEING HALLOWEEN, PETS ghosts, ghouls, gremlins and other denizens of the netherworld roaming our homes. In the world of the living, let me introduce to the young people of today—who are now used to the jack-o-lantern and witches flying on broomsticks of the commercialized Western world—the mythological tales about the spirits that used to terrorize us kids. The place where I grew up, although now a crowded part of Metro Manila, used to be a rustic village with plenty of fish ponds, fields and mandaues, and vast rivers overflowing it. Our favorite scene: We spent all the lovely would get together in school or other classes and during weekends...in the meadows or, in the evenings, under a street lamppost, either to play or to tell stories.

The stories were very tall ones, we knew, more but we believed them just the same. Most of the retellers were the adults—men, women and old at best. The stories were invariably about ghosts and ghouls, and because the experiences were supposedly those of people we knew, the tall tales gained more and more believability.

After the storytelling, when it was time to go home late in the night, we small kids ventured up our courage to walk the dark homeward paths, afraid to meet one or more of the monsters we just heard about.

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

Who will ever know those encounters of yesteryears?

The first that we expected to encounter was the *tiyanak*, a giant who supposedly inhabited a big tree in the neighborhood. He would sit on top of the tree, waiting for unsuspecting victims.

There was the *tiyanak*-ghoul, a woman with bad like wings, whose upper torso, at times, would separate from the lower torso (from the waist down) and fly away to look for victims. It had to rejoin the lower torso before sunrise or the would not be whole again. The way to combat the manananggal was to look for the lower torso and sprinkle salt and garlic on it so that the upper torso would no longer be able to reattach itself to it.

There there was the *duwende*, or dwarf. There were two kinds of dwarfs: the good one who would give you wealth and good health, and the bad one who could bring you bad luck.

There was the *tiktik*, which masqueraded as a baby and lured its victims by crying like a baby. When the would-be victim would start to look for the crying baby, the *tiyanak* would turn into deeper and deeper into the woods with its cries until he would get lost and couldn't get out of the woods. The way to break the spell was to take off one of your shoes and put it back on inside out.

Another dwarf was the *nuno sa puno*, literally the old man of the mound. It was supposed to be invisible and was said to inhabit the termite mounds in fields and meadows. They say the dwarf is cured by repeatedly reciting the Tagalog: "Nuno sa puno, gumaling ka, pasa mo sa puso pasa ko; sa puso ko sa iyo."

Then there was the *Aklolong*, half human, half horse. It was not a bad monster like most of the others, but meeting one was enough to scare one out of his wits.

The most common monster was the *aswang*. It could take on many forms—a big dog, pig or any other animal, on the proof for unborn babies to eat. In the old days, whenever there was a pregnant woman in the neighborhood, the men organized themselves into patrols to guard against *aswangs*. Woe to any pig or dog that blundered into wandering under the house of a pregnant woman.

Then there was the *manananggal*—dark suns the roof of a house, and then through a hole in the thatched nipa shingles, lower a piece of string to the mouth of a sleeping person and poison him. Because of this, people slept late dawn.

There was the *mumo* offended the *aswang* was the lowest page, the hapless soul of the stranger in the same weapon that killed Sen. Gonzalez Hamlet Barbers Barrio or the "sacred" of the ensemble. Hitting an *aswang* with a piece of these newspapers was enough to get her back into her vast human form.

The manghahilot was, of course, the witch, except that in our barrio it didn't wear pointed hats and fly on broomsticks. But it could easily cast its spell just by looking at you. In our barrio, there was only a family whose members were reputed to be witches. How did we know if a person was a witch? When he had red eyes. And when you looked at him and he met your gaze, you'd fall under his spell. We therefore tried to avoid their members as if they were lepers—that is, they owned the art not seen in the village and when we were told to buy something from that store, we kept our eyes downcast to avoid their gaze. I wonder now if they were aware of what we supposed about the village witch.

Then, of course, there were the *multo*, or ghosts, which were supposed to be the souls of the departed who had not found peace in the other world. They would come back to our world to do unfinished business, like murderers and the Gantz. But the most undoubted business—say an unsolved murder, or a message that they want to impart to their respective families.

The stories could take on many forms, too, such as the Caspar, the friendly ghost. Sometimes it could be just a voice in the dark, or banging doors and windows, or creaking floors, or lights that flick on and off, or anything, the sound of chains being dragged on the floor, a faded image on a photograph, a figure on a veil, a black butterfly flying inside the house, the howling of dogs...almost anything out of the ordinary that a fertile imagination could concoct into a picture.

But there's also a more pure. As this modern age, every supposedly invisible, educated adults still believe in ghosts.

Footnote to a farce

THERE'S THE RUB

Gemma de Quiroz

THE REDEMPTORISTS WERE FLYING THERE and that Thursday night, I got a number of text messages saying the absolutely named "Sigur ng Bayan" —"Sigur ni Joe" was more like it—had prospered, the Supreme Court voting to give it life more the Day of the Dead (4-7 Movies ago, a friend had told me he had it on good authority that the justices were more unanimous in their determination of it. I wondered what had happened. I was tempted to call but until I got confirming messages about the figures. The messages clearly carried the imprint of government ("and we rejoice!") in, some parties, which is lying. I figured I'd wait.

Up until the morning of Wednesday, friends of mine were texting me angrily that the justices had "sold out," or done "a deal" with the devil, as revealed by the 1993 a couple of days earlier—the public apparently did not think the Supreme Court would vote right on this wrong—and felt oppressed by it. But if Sigur's proponents thought they could railroad the Court by this time, well, maybe they didn't completely think wrong. I was under the impression the vote would not be close at all, and it 7-5 as close (a closer) as it comes. But in a democracy, whatever temptations it in via this country's very flawed democracy to cry foul, cold wind, all it takes a 56 percent plus one to carry a vote.

It's not 15-0, as was the case with 1837, 302 this and 1791, but I'll take it. Which brings me to the other two points I raised when the Supreme Court voted to put an end to these unelected impositions...or at least put a legal barrier against them so it hasn't really stopped them—some months ago.

The first is a deep oppression of what it has done. I did wonder at one point if the cynical predictions by some friends that Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban would consider as crowning jobs...his position since 1937, etc. apparently being merely an attempt to cover points with the public so that he could uphold Charter change, later on—would come true. Panganiban has defended that completely. Call it principle, call it keeping an eye to posterity, call it cross political ambition, I don't mind. In these days of term-counting, there is much to be said for a man considering his record in deep-cut. Every person should at least be able to see all your fingers; I'll take that blessing with much gratefulness and gratitude.

Frankly as in light of the pressures Joe de F and GMA put to bear on the justices. Not least through (expensive) full-page newspaper ads applauding them to extend their stay. I wonder when they got the money. Though subtle at this, I'm not so sure that GMA's heart was really into it. Her endorsement of their cause looked more like a quid pro quo for the delays they had done for her, but she didn't particularly care whether the "quo" was forthcoming or not. Why should she? She has three more years, having the 11th most comfortable economy of those who can install presidents, while her chances to survive, to look for options to extend power. Oh, yes, she will. So why should she be anxious to pave the way for Joe de Vos barge into Malacañang with a red, come was waiting at the end of it?

But the pressures were still tremendous, and the fact the justices who stood their ground deserve utmost commendation. Panganiban has already scored 6-0 against Malacañang, a thing nobody seriously thought possible. By the way, it was Eddie Campos who said the Supreme Court into a hallmark of sanity amid the swirling madness. That Court now stands as a formidable obstacle against the tyrannical manipulations of the thought minds in UMID Police and Joe de Vos house.

The brings me to the second point, which a hour we're allowed ourselves to swallow it as the private pass...just doing the right thing, the same thing, the commonsensical thing now takes on the aspect of epic heroism. The Supreme Court ruling, apparently penned by Antonio Carpio, immediately called the Cha-cha bid a "fraud" and resolved that the justices would not allow them, when to be used in a "grand deception" of the people. I mean that calls a spade a spade. Does that really say anything the public does not already know? Or know beyond any shadow of doubt? But of course, it is a grand deception, the open consuming only from the pit of the sun's government's financial boss. Or, as Antonio Trillanes said, from the bedroom to the deep beneath Makati's cemeteries, with many of its signs politicos' signatories currently and permanently residing there.

There was never any argument about Cha-cha's necessity or lack of thereof. It was just a crass attempt by a selfish few to bend the country to their will, an inner and no less than Malacañang's attempt to counter flimsy personality for being about employment. It wasn't a question of if it was a question of when. It wasn't a question of intervention, it was a question of how much. There was nothing there to wonder with the head, there was everything there to wonder with the heart. Thankfully, the court did the right thing, the new thing, the commonsensical thing.

But that still leaves us with the question: Are we simply going to be content dwelling off the timid bugging, reactions of this government? Are we simply going to be content preventing GMA from unloading 1017, EO 464, DPE, Cha-cha and whatever new Halloween horror comes her head? Are we simply going to plunge into drunken revelry and taint to our deliverance from the government from counting a duly elected mayor, occupying a duly constituted Constitution and mandating duly instituted journalists and political activists? Has that become the summum bonum of our existence? Has that become the supreme expression of our national ambition?

Or will we go further and do something about the source of the bane?

The Sigaw case (3)

Sounding Board

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

IF YOU LISTEN TO THE ADVOCATES IN charge, what you will hear are predictions of doom if any bid to pass the constitutional hangover days are sidestepped. We hear phrases like, "This is real lame chance," "We will never make progress if we fail us to have change," "We will be the next Bangladesh if we stay with the present system." I believe that the best way of dealing with the type of rhetoric is to ignore it. Only the people who are preparing sold to see what to them will lead us to the Promised Land.

Let us take a look at the draft which Sigaw ng Bayan attached to its Supreme Court petition. Contrary to what it is not clear whether the text of the draft they submitted to the Comelec and the Supreme Court are the same as the one they asked the people to affix their signatures to. We will assume that this is the draft in which the proposed shift from a bicameral to a unicameral system is effected but it contains provisions which, if they stand, will serve to defeat the petition.

I have been watching Constitutional Law for almost 55 years now and I think my readers will credit me to start with possessing some facility in reading constitutional texts. I have also been lucky to go to Spain not what Sigaw's draft for some Constitution is saying. I must confess that I have difficulty in navigating through it. It's for having a problem figuring what it's saying, how much more the ordinary Filipino who does not have constitutional law for breakfast, lunch and dinner like me.

The draft is very sloppily done. We need not even talk of intentional deception... even if indeed the text is deceiving. I suspect that the authors of the proposed draft have not done their homework well enough as a result of changing the Constitution is allowed to handle such amendments and not revision. I also suspect that they would also argue that what they were proposing was not a shift to unicameral but a revision. Worse, they had to look for a way of packaging their proposal in a manner that they hoped could disguise the proposed revision as a mere amendment. They did this by attempting to give the impression that all they wanted was to change Article VI on the Legislature and Article VII, the article on the Executive Department. No other article is mentioned except the Transitory Provisions.

What they omit to tell, in fact, is not a complete document but a draft, mainly of instructions for revising the present Constitution consent a unicameral parliamentary system—with the aid of a one-of-a-kind Congress. Thus, the legislature, after it duly drafted a set of instructions which in fact, 2/3 equivalently says "Ladies and gentlemen, take out your scissors and paste in Article VI, Cs on Sections 18 and 24, erase everything else, but whenever the words 'Senate,' 'Senator,' or 'House of Representatives' or 'Congress' or 'Senator' or 'Member of the House of Representatives' replace it with 'Member of Parliament.' Whenever they say 'Congress,' they mean 'Parliament'—if you find anything 'inconsistent with the Parliamentary system of government ... they will be amended to conform with a parliamentary system." Isn't that a parliamentary?

As for the Executive Department, the instruction is like. It goes this only: "Ladies and gentlemen, open your copy of the Constitution to Article VII, hold it to your scissors, cut out Secs. 1, 3, 9, 10, 11 and 12, retain everything else, but whenever in the words 'President' and 'Acting President' appear, replace them with 'Prime Minister.' See if you think that any of what remains is inconsistent with a parliamentary system, it will be amended."

But you might ask, "Who will identify the possible inconsistencies with a parliamentary system and who will do the identifying?" The answer to the question is in Sec. 4(2) of the proposed law to do the Transitory Provisions, which says, "Within forty-five days from ratification of these amendments, the interim Parliament shall convene to propose amendments to, or revisions of, the Constitution consistent with the principles of local autonomy, decentralization and system of economy."

In other words, what is being proposed is not just the final decision to adopt the whole draft but also to delegate almost absolute powers to the interim Parliament to do the Constitution does not allow proposal of an interim Parliament. The Parliament chooses the prime minister from among themselves. The Parliament does not allow the prime minister to appoint the cabinet ministers and the Cabinet remains in being as they enjoy the confidence of the Parliament.

In standard parliamentary systems, the prime minister may be removed by the Parliament through a no-confidence vote. In the draft being proposed, there is mention of the election of a prime minister but there is no mention of a removal/dismissal vote. We do not, therefore, know how up-to-the-minute may be removed once he is elected. Perhaps, this too will be entrusted by the people about already agreed, which requires Parliament to propose amendments and revisions within 45 days. (To be continued)

Unite or perish!

Kris-Crossing Mindanao

Nassefya Mustafa

ONE GOOD NEWS THAT CAME RIGHT AFTER Ramadan was the result of a very recent survey which showed that more than 80 percent of Filipinos do not think Muslims are "terrorists." However, that such a survey was made only underscores the reality that a schism exists between the Christians and Muslims of this country.

Why is this so, why should this be so? Must we allow this sorry state of affairs to continue? And what? How can this be resolved?

These were some of the questions facing hundred another guests who came to answer these questions at MMC, "Basilan Today." Unfortunately, although the host members were there, Sarah Jamilah Abbas, lawyer Atty Ramon, Prof. Julkipli Wadi and a Muslim convert, Muhammad Ali Wright on Dios—one hour was simply too short a time to satisfactorily discuss the complex issues that have confronted the Mindanao people.

Too complex indeed are the issues that violence they are addressed at the very core—which is the legitimate and valid grievances of the Muslim over a blatantly unjust historical wrongs—to solve the problem of poverty in Mindanao and, unfortunately not "all-out" wars, can solve the so-called "Mindanao problem."

Why not? Because the truth is, for Moros or Muslims or by whatever name you wish to call us, we are the problem.

The survey results also came after the MILF-GRP peace negotiations got snagged on the issue of ancestral domain, and after MILF Chair Al Haj Murad was charged with murder in connection with the Buliok massacre in Mindanao. The charge has since been dropped but it undeniably damaged the climate of trust that a true quest for a successful peace negotiation.

But then, the attitude of both the government and a great number of Christian Filipinos toward the Moros has always been characterized by an intolerance, intolerance-to-tolerance, injustice-to-tolerance, discrimination, incompetence-denial, one-man-inheritance, unity-dishonesty.

Among Philippine presidents, only one, Fidel Ramos, had a real understanding of the Mindanao problem. He, in assuming the historical rights of the Muslims which he, the brilliant lawyer that he was, knew could be defended in any world court, he did not want that to result in the "marginalization" of the Christians in Mindanao, being "forced to flee from their homes." It was a right-to-use, a lovely vision, and he was ridiculed for it.

There is, to begin with, the acrimonious issue of ancestral domain. Muslims thought that because the majority of its inhabitants were Christianized by religious decree no longer has historical rights.

But then, there remains the genuine land problem born in recent history, more than true in Mindanao by the government as the instrument of policy in Pilipinas who turned land-rich Muslims into land-poor citizens, with a lot and right to many homelessness, joblessness and powerless.

There after buying from the Spaniards what was not theirs to sell, the American colonial government chose many of land to their compatriots and to American companies. Landless farmers were stripped from native to subdusters, going there land of their true to fit. Then manner land-grabbing was continued by the Philippine government through its "homestead" program.

And now to complete the marginalization of the natives, a sovereign people, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo government is doubly determined to cut the Muslim into changing the Constitution, some hell or high water, defying the Commission on Elections, the Supreme Court (both tainted but "people's initiative") and God Himself.

This "some hell or high water" is the Congress, as a unicameral assembly, will initiate or no, will allow her signers to own hands to ensure the success of her "illegal regime" scheme, in which Mindanao will be the agricultural zone. There will be massive demolitions of the Muslims and the indigenous people who, for their own survival, will be forever and hopelessly cast in perpetual bondage to the evil, as productive raw materials for multinational companies, with the remaining land to be redistributed to the constituencies.

For recently appointed governor have vowed that they will maintain "peace and order" in the mega-regions. I shudder to the thought.

Talisman, on Kublai's dress, heralded the illusory among the Mongol Empire's possessions of which, he said, they have "no bargaining power." I remember distinctly what the late historian Ferdinand Francis Eusebio once told me when we were in the Zamboanga City to Zamboanga City to Manila. He was a Muslim, and he was a Christian missionary. I was traveling a week, drop on federalism when Sen. Aquilino Pimentel and Dr. Michael Ricarte were the resource persons.

"We're planning to free ourselves from imperial Manila," I told him.

"You mean you have made up with the Mindanao?" he countered. "Bida, wishing management plans. Sin with this administration. Bida, wishing any administration. Look at the ARMM. This is my unconditional advice—unite or perish."

Brothers and sisters, we who are now either emigrant or "refugees," "Muslims" and "Islamic terrorists," in a country that personally calls itself the only Christian country in Southeast Asia," would do well to heed that advice and "build the topic" to-be—in repairing, with all our might, the Mindanao community.

* * *

Comments to nfmustafa13@yahoo.com

Memorial landscape

The Long View

Manuel L. Quezon III

AS A YOUNG BOY, MY FIRST BIG TRIP WAS TO THE U.S. Not to what he called "pilgrimages." Our first stop in Washington, D.C. was to the Lincoln Memorial, to look at the plaque listing the delegates to the Malolos Congress, and see for myself "how many names are still familiar to our national life."

The second was to the Agoncillo Mansion in Alexandria, where I climbed to the very top of the house, to the bedroom, and grandaughter of the general showed us around. Finally, we ended up in the garden, gazing at the white marble tomb of Emilio Aguinaldo, and we said a short prayer for the souls of the departed.

There would be other pilgrimages, but the first pilgrimage I remember and the pilgrimage that we always undertook, year after year, was the annual pilgrimage to the Manila North Cemetery. Among my earliest memories are the visits to the family plot where my grandfather was first buried, before his remains were moved to the Quezon Memorial in 1979. From an early age, I was exposed to the idea that the dead are not forgotten, that we pay our respects, and we thank to it. Across our family plot was the tomb—in this case still elevated—of my grandfather's—of Teodoro Manuel Roxas.

Now, I am not in any family plot, of course, were the tombs of the famous and the great; tombs my father would point out as worthy of veneration and visit. This is how I learned about the lives of many people those of my age no longer know anything about: Rizal, Bonifacio, Aguinaldo, Magsaysay, the key names who died in a plane crash on their way to a jamboree; the reverent of the Revolution, and later, shortly before my father passed away, Pedrito Bautista, Adela Gregorio, and the great patriot of Philippine music.

Some years back, Inero magazine approached me to write an article on the North Cemetery. A problem immediately came to the fore. A place I know—and it is exactly what I have even come to know—is not, in fact, what it is supposed to be. How many Filipinos are aware that while the Libingan ng mga Bayani is supposed to be Arlington Cemetery of the Philippines, there are many famous men

Comments to rulegacy13@yahoo.com

Education today, wealth tomorrow

(Excerpts from a speech delivered at the 32th Annual Honors Recognition Conference Institute Nov. 27, 2004.)

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A BIG OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE a difference, then you must first and foremost look for a big problem.

A recent article titled "A Matter in Crisis: The Pitfalls and Prospects of Reforming Philippine Education," which was published in The Educator, says, "Considered a basic human right, education is mandated by the law to be subsidized by government up to the secondary school levels. But given government's limited budget and the already gargantuan task of providing enough classrooms, teachers and textbooks for some 18 million elementary pupils, we have failed to address the need to provide quality education."

Out of 100 pupils enrolled in Grade 1, only 65 will complete Grade 6. From there, only 57 will enroll in high school and only 42 of these will graduate. More than twice as many boys drop out as do boys that girls.

The Department of Education of 42 high school graduates will go to college, but only 14 will graduate, and only two will earn a master's degree.

As you can plainly see, as far as big problems go, the public school system presents us with an intensive opportunity to make a difference.

How has the private sector responded to this?

In June of this year, on the same day that the League of Corporate Foundations kicked off our CSR Expo 2004 event, the inspiration referred to private sector involvement as the brightest spot in Philippine public education. Every year, the awards show that the private sector has poured literally billions of pesos into education. Many of our members and friends in the private sector have taken an education-focused Corporate Social Responsibility to heart. But clearly, one very important question remains: What exactly in terms of quality education do we have to show today?

We have had many creative and sophisticated programs that serve as "best practices," but these have often been very difficult to replicate and scale up.

Input indicators are recorded and reported all the time: amount of resources spent, number of classrooms constructed, number of teachers trained, number of scholars assisted. After all, we in the private sector have been trained to always measure bottom lines. But we have conspicuously neglected the return on our investments in education.

A lot has been said about the importance of the youth in nation-building. Our commitment to educating our youth has been articulated just as much. However, it seems that little has been done to measure that commitment into a viable education system—one that corresponds to the need for high-quality education for all our children.

Considering that today's youth are tomorrow's workforce, teachers, entrepreneurs, parents, citizens, CEOs, CFOs, wealth creators and leaders, then investing in their education today will translate to wealth-creation tomorrow. If the Philippines is to be competitive in the global economy, the Filipino child today pays off big time. However, our children are not learning at least as much as they should. Many high school students can hardly read or write. They are grossly unprepared to cope with the practicalities of daily life. To succeed in today's competitive global economy they need substantial skills.

Studies show a direct link between education and income. The chances for gainful employment and better-paying opportunities increase as an individual's education level rises.

Admittedly, our efforts thus far continue to take varied directions, some quite admirable. But what is the collective impact? How much do we collectively make a real difference? We can begin by supporting the private public partnership for education that the GCF and a host of other private organizations are currently organizing together with Education Secretary Jesli Lapus. Last Sept. 20, we co-launched the Adopt-a-School program together with the Department of Education.

Along with that, we unveiled the "5-5-5" framework, which aims to raise the national achievement average from 60 percent falling level to a passing mark—from 57 percent to 75 percent within the next five years.

The framework is simple. Every school year is that of students who are actually and measurably doing better in school. The numbers "5-5" and "75" symbolize our goal to move from mediocrity to excellence.

This unprecedented partnership between the private sector and the DepEd has been working out on the field for the first time in recent DepEd memory—and perhaps ever in the country's history. We are dealt more than a million of five secretaries for Private Public Sector Partnership for Education Beltran.

More encouraging, we seem have the full support of multilateral and donor agencies for our efforts to refocus on results. We are in serious talks with the United States Agency for International Development, the Asian Development Bank, and the World Bank to provide technical assistance and support to ensure that we are all work together toward ensuring quality education for all.

On the many discussions—and arguments—we have had on education quality, perhaps one of the toughest questions to answer came from former Education Secretary Florencio "Bobby" Abad. He asked: "How do we know? How accurate are the scores that the 75 passing grade? The students? The teachers? The principals? The superintendents? The regional directors? The secretary of education? My answer: all of us! Not just some of us, but every one of us must cooperate enough to want to make a real difference.

Let me paraphrase a few lines from our Color Barkada Jingle: "Bahay ko, ang maganda! Kung maaalis, ah di maganda, Ang mahalaga, may sarili kang bahay. Ang mahalaga, ikaw ang may. Ang ating bahay, ang ating tahanan. Ang ating bayan. Ang ating Pilipinas."

Ms. Cecilia L. Alcantara is the president and executive director of Color Code Foundation and sits in the ACF Advisory Council. She is also a board member of the Association of Foundations and the Philippine Council for NGO Certification.

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Victims' folks doubt Melo Commission

THERE IS NO URGENT NEED TO FIND OUT [illegible] who were [illegible] in Bulacan on June 20, 2006. They have been missing for almost four months now.

We have witnesses and strong evidence that point to the military as the perpetrator. That was why we filed a habeas corpus petition. It was only in the 18th inq, after a meeting that he could be tired for contempt, that Maj. Jovito Palparan finally attended the hearing...but that is another story.

The head of state and commander in chief has ordered Melo's Report to help the families of the victims of "forced disappearances" to find our missing loved ones. Neither has the effect of [illegible] and pro-active measure to prevent forced disappearances.

President Macapagal-Arroyo created the Melo Commission on Aug. 31, purportedly to investigate the spate of extrajudicial killings in the country. The commission assured the public that it would take to investigate forced disappearances.

LETTERS

In fact, our findings [illegible] abuse participating in the Melo Commission.

Clearly, "circumstances" because: (1) certain stakeholders, such as the victims' families and human rights groups, were not consulted; (2) it was too close and consequently about to proceedures; (3) we were not assured that our witnesses would be protected; (4) it was deficient by independent and its ability to render justice; and (5) it seemed that it was created only for appearances—what with Mr. Melo's childhood members—to calm the concerns of the international community.

We gave it the benefit of the doubt, though, and wished for it to change its composition and disregard the report of the highly-[illegible] Task Force Usig. But the commission commenced another hearing over which it said has been suspended by Justice that it sent us an invitation and that we [illegible]. (PDI, 10/9/06)

For the record, from the time the Melo Commission was created, we did not receive any formal communication from that body. It could be done that, we are only there can be many reports on the [illegible] of the military and the Arroyo regime in the political killings, forced disappearances and other human rights violations.

—FELICIDA CAGAMPAN
AND CONCEPCION ORTEGA,
members of missing (P-students),
c/o kasapatan.phil@gmail.com

Hand-washing with safe water prevents spread of neonatal sepsis

[illegible] are the major cause of neonatal sepsis. Safe water used in hand washing is the single most important measure for preventing or controlling the spread of neonatal sepsis to hospitals.

Periodic disinfection of [illegible] surfaces, as well as medical equipment and devices, is of utmost importance to prevent infection and spread of the diseases.

The Board of Summer Engg. Nursing of the Professional Regulation Commission, chaired by Florencio G. Cimatu, has released the parameters for hospital inspection.

If the Nihal Medical Center and all hospitals will observe the parameters on hospital sanitation released by the board, its newborns shall will the least neonatal sepsis.

—RENALIE ALBAYE,
renalie_alb@yahoo.com

Nothing personal, Your Honor

[illegible] INTO THE LAST PARAGRAPH [illegible] Regent Cruz's column, "The blight of billboards" (PDI, 12/21/06), I was getting ready to stand up and applaud the retired Supreme Court justice, whose sentiments about billboards I share completely, however, after reading the very last sentence, I didn't end up clapping. I ended up dropping my arms in disbelief, shaking disgust.

It was unkind of Cruz to have made a very spiteful statement about the model on an insurance company's billboards. Why did he have to promote that the men with a "redemption face" probably [illegible] thought that he had "the same magnetism as a seductive starlet"? What [illegible] that remarked for sometime in a column that otherwise would have been a strong exhaustive notes up? Was Cruz jealous—and very resentful that he does not [illegible] display on those towering billboards?

It was sad that Cruz, who's supposedly very learned and wise, abused and misused his considerable journalistic power, using precious space to classify somebody person just for the look of it.

—CLAUDE LEUIG C. [illegible],
GERMAN ARESAS,
claudelucas2005@yahoo.com

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Errors in Pag-Ibig records

IT HAS BEEN FOUR years and seven months since I became a regular employee of the Department of Labor and Employment.

On June 8, 2006, I filed my membership Status Verification Slip (MSVS) with the satellite office of the Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF) in Calamba so would myself of a housing loan. I have completed all the requirements for such loan and that office has issued a certification on my Pag-Ibig membership for the last two years.

However, when I followed up the status of my application, I was told that I have been made my contributions for March to June of this year. So, in July 14, 2006, I submitted a copy of the official receipt and the list of employees, with my name on it, whose salaries were deducted for Pag-Ibig contributions.

Months have passed and I have been waiting for the approval of my housing loan only to find out that the San Pablo branch of HDMF has disapproved my application because, it explained, my contributions are not enough to qualify me for a housing loan. During Solemn ops, I have been told that my remarks in Cabuyao and San Pablo branch have irreconcilable discrepancies.

I strongly feel that I should not be denied of my right to secure a housing loan. After all, my monthly salary is deducted a certain amount for my Pag-Ibig contribution. Who should I be penalized for the error of HDMF contributors? Can't the agency make the proper corrections? I hope it has the capability to reconcile its records. Let I hope that in my case it makes the correction while I am still young and capable of paying for the loan.

—RAMIRO D. [illegible],
MCEMPLOYEE,
OIC/Legion A-1,
39 Ambrosio Bldg. II,
Barangay Parian,
Calamba City, Laguna

Across the NATION

Truck rams vehicles; 17 dead, 14 hurt

RESIDENTS look at the wrecked vehicles hit by a 10-wheeler truck that crashed into revelers gathered for a festival along the national highway in Makilala, North Cotabato on Saturday afternoon. (JOHN LEO ESPINOSA/PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER)

KIDAPAWAN CITY—SEVENTEEN PERSONS DIED AND 14 others were wounded when a dump truck rammed at least 10 vehicles and barangay fiesta revelers in Makilala, North Cotabato on Saturday afternoon, according to Makilala Mayor Honorio Respicio.

Makilala police chief Insp. Reynaldo Dance said the truck, loaded with gravel and driven by Florante Bonilla of Matanao, Davao del Sur, lost its brakes.

Apparently, the driver panicked and did not know what to do," Senior Insp. Dance said. Only driver Ernesto Cruz of another vehicle was managed to avoid collision with the wayward dump truck.

"I noticed the driver was honking his horn very loud to warn people that something was wrong with his vehicle," he recalled. "Suddenly, the truck started plowing into parked vehicles," he added.

North Cotabato police director Senior Supt. Nolie to Oday said people in Barangay Malasila were celebrating their fiesta when the accident happened.

"There were many people along the highway because it was the village fiesta," Oday told the newsmen.

The truck also hit some of the people who were watching a basketball game in a court near the highway.

One of the vehicles that the truck hit was a multicab loaded with members of the Central Mindanao's search and rescue team.

The truck bumped the multicab from behind, sending it upside down resulting to the deaths of PO3 Ronnie Israel of the Kidapawan City police, driver killed were Jonathan Nunga, a radiologist of the Kidapawan Medical Specialist Hospital, Lovely Ipegan, Nelson Pawenduren, Pedro Rubas, Rolando Cardenas, Manuel Gironda, Randi Oj Nuda Tirona, Jovito Mandiola, Nicolas Mandiola, Teresdad Bayo, Epifanio Cabrera, Richard Tabanao and Merit Duque. Two others remained unidentified.

Among the injured was SPO1 Jose Mario Crejtal Medina, trainer of the airport's search and rescue unit. The group had just come from Sir Bros, a known swimming resort in Makilala, and was heading for home when the fresh accident occurred. Four others remained in critical condition at the Kidapawan City Medical Hospital, according to Respicio. — Edwin Fernandez and Jeoff ey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao

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Rights groups remember victims of martial law, political killings

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

JAVIER

KOLO CITY—FORMER political detainees and human rights groups on Saturday gathered in the Monument of Heroes in the Plaza Libertad here to remember those who died fighting martial law and the growing number of victims of political killings.

The "Lakbayan Martial" held ahead of the observance of All Souls' Day this week was attended by about 50 friends, relatives and colleagues of the victims.

They lit candles, offered flowers and sang nationalist songs as they gathered at the foot of the eight-foot-tall and six-foot-wide monument near the corner of the historic plaza. They later shared snacks consisting of sandwiches and juice in soya packs.

The names of the 405 peasant leaders, students, rebels and opposition figures in Negros Island who died fighting the Marcos dictatorship and in succeeding years were painted on red strips of cloth and hung beside the monument.

Among the names were former detainees Jovito Javier, guerrilla leader Constantino "Dulay-Ding-ing" Chiva, Antonio Arabit leader Nicolasa "Cita" Jaron and peasant leader Salvacion Cano.

"Their deaths will never go unmourned, loved because they died not just for their families but for our people," said lawyer Rodolfo Lugay, who was detained after martial law was declared on Sept. 21, 1972.

Malaguena Rep. Rafael Mariano said during the short program that remembering the victims of extra-judicial killings was one way of crying out for justice for the victims.

He noted that more than 750 victims of political killings have occurred since Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo came to power in 2001.

He said it was shameful that the Task Force Usig and the Melo Commission, government-created bodies tasked to investigate the killings of activists, journalists and lawyers, would relax and stop the killings.

"The cries for justice remain unanswered," said Mariano.

He said the continued killings have raised concerns from European governments, international human rights organizations and the entire Parliamentary Union.

Anakpawis-ave chair Carmen Deveraza said the killings should be stopped. "The killings are continuing and there are so many Garcia, Sesonong ...," she lamented.

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MILF rebels, Army forces clash briefly in peace zone

COTABATO CITY—GOVERNMENT forces and Moro rebels engaged in a brief fighting in Barangay Kuloy Shutit Apiak town in Maguindanao yesterday morning.

The military said it was investigating the incident as it closely monitors the cease-fire agreement and calms amid an impasse in the ongoing peace process.

Ed Kabalu, speaking for the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), claimed that members of the civilian volunteer organization (CVO) attacked MILF positions in an area identified by both sides as a buffer zone to preserve one.

Kabalu said the MILF under Commander Abu Bashir noticed at about 7:30 a.m. Army-backed militiamen approaching their positions.

"Upon seeing that the government forces were crossing the buffer zone as their battle gear, the MILF men formed to ensure this," Kabalu told the Inquirer.

The buffer zone, established by the International Monitoring Team (IMT), the government, government, and the MILF ceasefire panel, separates the two forces in Barangay Kuloy zone of bloody skirmishes in July.

The Army's 6th Infantry Division, in a statement, said it was investigating the clash and confirmed nobody was hurt from either side.

The Malaysian-led IMT, under Major Gen. Tan Mohammad Ismail Khan, quickly intervened and prevented what could have been another shooting war between the government troops and MILF forces.

According to an Army source, about 30 MILF fighters stationed the base camp of Bravo Company of the 64th Infantry Battalion.

"The soldiers, recognizing the existing ceasefire accord, simply fired warning shots to push back the approaching rebels," the Army intelligence officer told the Inquirer.

The landing of bullets lasted for about 30 minutes, the Army officer said.

But Kabalu had another story.

"We were the ones attacked as our detachment forks and ensure-ceased by mortar shells in MILF positions coming from the other side," Kabalu said, adding that the MILF peace panel will file a complaint before the GRP/MILF peace panels. Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

S.O.S. Sorsogon

Would like to continue its appeal to friends and sympathizers to send their donations for the Sorsogon victims of Typhoon "Milenyo." Let's put together as much help as we can to alleviate the immediate needs of the Sorsogon casualties of this calamity.

The latest donors who have generously answered our appeal are Ma. Cecilia Bautista, P10,000; the Philippine Homeowners Association, Ladies Auxiliary Brigade, P7,000; Mellie Belen, P500; GO and Connie Manggawa, P1,800; Elias Longalong, P1,000; Ruby June Tan, P500.

Blonde Maain Corp. sent 8 cases of noodles and biscuits; Marvin Cagaoan, 1 large bag of clothing and 4 boxes of books and magazines; Liling Caramesola, 1 set Encyclopedia Britannica; Nino Cruz, 2 cases Lucky Me noodles and 1 sack rice; Leny Villafranca, 1 box clothes and shoes; Homer Ignacio, 2 boxes clothes and shoes; Blemer Dykiaco, 1 box clothes and shoes; Irma Caramesola, 1 box clothes, 1 box books and 1 dinner coffee mugs; M. Garcia, 1 bag clothes; Anne Ulmas 1 box clothes.

The books are intended for schoolchildren who have lost their reading materials because of the devastating typhoon.

The S.O.S. Sorsogon Volunteers acknowledge with gratitude the magnanimous response of friends and benefactors who have entrusted us to send their donations. They wish to announce that they will continue to receive donations until Nov. 15.

The drop-off points for those who wish to donate food, clothing, household items and other goods are the Philam Homes Barangay Hall, West Ave. Quezon City, c/o Dyhie Yvonne Diaz, 926-0182, and the Samaritn de San Antonio Convent in Forbes Park.

Cash or checks may be deposited to any branch of the Bank of the Philippine Islands, account no. 0811-1047-01. Please fax a copy of the donation deposit slip to 373-3404.

For details, call Florinda Ibarra-Pagsanghan, 920-1817; Ella Duran-Nolasco, 646-9903; Araceli Grajo Uriarte, 27 20810 and 928-9044; and Fr. Gerard Devesa, 0918-9080033.

Sorsogon folk honor Magsaysay awardee

SORSOGON CITY—FRIENDS AND family members, friends and family members feted Eugenia Duran Apostol, the first and only Sorsogon native to have received the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award, in a testimonial dinner on Saturday evening here.

The dinner, hosted by the Kasanggayahan Foundation Inc. (KFI), should have been part of the culminating activity of the Kasanggayahan festival, an annual celebration marking the foundation of the province.

But after Typhoon "Milenyo" ravaged the province, the festival was cancelled.

The simple dinner was attended by local personalities from the church, civic, business and local governments led by Bishop Arturo Bastes and Jesus Arvin, SJP chair Msgr. Francisco Mendoza, business and civic leaders Linda Nisce, Ian Lewis, Jo-ey Duran and Bobbit Lee.

In her speech, Apostol thanked her kababayans for the honor as she recalled an incident which could have totally altered her life.

APOSTOL

She said it was here by the kindness of an unknown bus conductor who guided her home when she got lost when she was just about 5 years old, her family had almost given up on her that time.

A daughter of Sorsogon's former representative to the National Assembly, Apostol received the prestigious RM award for journalism, literature and creative communication arts in recognition of her effective use of mass media for the benefit of the general public.

Apostol courageously published life and Mr. magazine, which was critical of the Marcos dictatorship during the martial law period.

She is the prime mover of the first ever Sorsogon INDIA, which raises funds for the victims of Milenyo, and a benefactor of the Sorsogon Museum now being built at the old provincial hospital.

Apostol founded the Inquirer in 1986. Bobby Lobodan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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ARREST WARRANT UNSERVED

Murder suspect roams freely, victim's kin say

HALLOWEEN
Kids dressed up to scare customers at a mall in Davao City as part of a Halloween show.

NIA workers fear rationalization may reduce productivity

By Tonera Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

BALAC CITY—RELATIVES OF a slain labor leader at the Hacienda Luisita here have assailed the police for failing to arrest an Army soldier despite a warrant issued on Friday for a regional trial court in Aloc for murder charges.

The accused, Pfc Rodrigo de la Cruz, had been seen roaming freely in several villages within the Cojuangco family-owned sugar estate, according to Romeo Ramos, elder brother of Ricardo Ramos, president of the Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union (Catlu).

Ricardo, 45, was shot dead in his bar at past 9 p.m. on Oct. 20, 2005, hours after he and Department of Labor and Employment representatives handed out at least P6.4 million in back wages that the management agreed to pay as the strike entered its first week.

"Striking some of the Task Force Aurora and the police promised us [Romeo Philippine Bonoan] Police chief] General Ubaldo Lomibao. They can't even arrest the killer," Romeo said.

Ricardo was among the 14 victims of extra-judicial killings that occurred in Tarlac as the strike by Catlu's 7,000 members and the United Luisita Workers Union's 5,000 farm workers dragged. Seven striking workers and their supporters were killed in a row with soldiers and policemen on Nov. 16, 2004.

Management had denied a hand in any of those killings, and the police had blamed either the New People's Army or an undocumented vigilante group that all farm workers belonging to the same "KKK."

In four bouts of killings, only the case of Bonoa and Aglipayan priest William Tadena had reached the courts.

Atty Rosario Ramos, a councilor in Barangay Maguindanao, said the filing of the case did not guarantee that justice would be assumed for his brother.

Be in Cruz, he said, had gone around the villages wearing fatigues clothes. "He is still supposed to be in active service," Ramos said.

Another suspect, Pfc Romeo Castillo, had been dropped from the case due to lack of evidence, a copy of the preliminary investigation's resolution showed.

Both soldiers belonged to the Army's 24th Infantry Battalion that set up a detachment not less than 300 meters from the site of the killing, Ramos said.

Lily, the wife of Ricardo Ramos, said she feared for her family's safety as De la Cruz roamed freely.

She said Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, should help implement the arrest warrant that was issued on June 6 to the police in Isabela, De la Cruz's home address.

Lt. Col. Formilo Barrios of the military's Judge Advocate General's Office said the warrant should not be served because he filed a petition for review at the Department of Justice in June on behalf of De la Cruz.

"No development," Barrios said when asked on the status of the petition. It questioned the resolution of the city prosecutor.

According to Bonoan, the results of the ballistic test showed that De la Cruz did not fire his service gun, an M-16 rifle. Police investigators in Tarlac had reported that the cartridge found in the army soldiers were fired from an M-14 rifle.

"There were no attempts to serve the warrant," Barrios said, adding the office of the two soldiers were turned over to the police.

He said it was "very impossible" for De la Cruz and Castillo to kill Ramos because "they were looking for him the day after."

Asked where De la Cruz was, he said, "He's in our custody at the 7th Infantry Division (in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija."

Told that the soldier was seen in Hacienda Luisita, Barrios said De la Cruz should remain in camp.

By Tonera Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

"The target area to be irrigated all over the country will be impossible to achieve.

"We have more work before us if only to achieve the target of providing irrigation services to the farmers and less than half of the three million hectares of rice lands is irrigated," Pe said.

He added that the government believes only irrigated 1.3 million hectares of rice lands while the remaining 1.7 million hectares of lands will not irrigated.

To cool the NIA has 5,000 employees at present and if the rationalization plan is implemented only 3,095 will remain to field irrigation facilities.

"There are 190 permanent employees now in Bicol and it will be reduced to only 123 once the rationalization plan pushes through," he said.

He said the Abaya opposed the reconstruction plan because agricultural productivity would be sacrificed and services to the farmers would not be promoted.

Jean-Escamilla Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

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Airline No. 3	1,041,459	1,549,049	11.6%
Airline No. 4	512,922	1,049,513	5.7%
Airline No. 5	277,346	398,257	3.1%
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Gov't to continue clearing of Boracay illegal structures

By Hector B Bangoy Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

BORACAY—THE DEMOLITION of illegal structures on the foreshore of world-famous Boracay Island will continue until the "no-build zone" is all cleared, said Tourism Secretary Joseph "Joe" Durano.

"It is for the common good," Durano told reporters here Wednesday during the inauguration of the Boracay Tourism Assembly.

Durano said the process had been followed and the rights of business owners, especially those affected by the clearing up of structures, were being respected.

He said notices had earlier been issued to most owners who put up the structures within the 20-meter "no-build zone" from the coastline.

Durano said that aside from clearing up the shoreline, the Philippine Tourism Authority and other government agencies would work for the improvement of the drainage and sewerage system of Boracay, the country's prime tourist destination.

A group of resort and business owners on the island welcomed the demolition operations.

They suggested that shopkeepers in front of the beach also be told to clear the beaches and make our streets safe," Boracay Action Group president Jun Bautista said.

Boracay Island Water Company president Jesus Salvador said he welcomed the demolition of illegal structures, which he said had been contributing to the pollution of the island's waters.

Salvador said illegal structures had been removed from the shoreline of Boat Station 1 at the northern tip of the island to Boat Station 3 in the south.

"Our beaches are clean and look nice," said Salvador.

He said some establishments that had temporary structures and objects, such as chairs and tables, were removed from the area although they possessed temporary permits while construction was ongoing in their vicinity.

The sustainability of Boracay's development has become urgent as tourist arrivals continue to increase. Last year, visitors numbered 499,467. It was 438,755 in 2004.

The island's tourism industry contributed P8.16 billion to the economy last year.

Kudarat gov rejects computer deal offer

ISULAN, SULTAN KUDARAT—THE GOVERNOR of the province has rejected a firm's offer to computerize offices of the newly built provincial capitol here on negotiated terms.

Gov. Pax Mangudadatu literally locked the officers' glass doors to "tender-like-cable transactions."

Some witnesses said Mangudadatu had "scolded" a contractor for suspected overpricing project costs at computerizing local offices.

"Please ... Let there be no 'under-the-table dealings' here," Mangudadatu was quoted as telling to Filipino-Chinese executive of a computer company who met him at his office on Oct. 26.

"Monopoly is gov. It (no. is angry)," said a known computer guy from the governor's office.

"I have sworn to the Koran never to cause a single centavo corruption in my office," said the Maguindanaon Muslim executive of a predominantly Christian province.

The contractor, who asked that his and his firm's identities be withheld, later said he had asked the governor for an appointment for a PowerPoint presentation of his company's profile and technical plans for the job he was offering.

He said his company, which is based in Metro Manila, had established a corporate name in the field of information technology.

Asked, however, if the service offered was prompted by a published notice for open bidding, the firm's representative said he was not aware of any.

Mangudadatu said he had the impression that the computer firm representative was trying to entice him for a negotiated contract of over P500,000 to computerize the provincial offices.

Any contract should go through public bidding, which would open smallest details of a latest computerization to the public, he said.

"That (offer) is too costly. We know of some possibly cheaper alternatives. We will look into this and I warned him (the salesperson) against any attempts to even 'grease' me," Mangudadatu said.

The contractor explained that his prepared sufficient labor and professional fees, overhead cost like duty, entertainment, as well as expenses for a training program package for 'IT staff to be hired.

He said the training would also include troubleshooting, human resource capability for systems maintenance. Noah B. Abadiano, Inquirer Mindanao

60 NPA members attack Army unit, cement factory

LT. JONATHAN Abo, commanding officer of the 22nd Infantry Battalion in Iligan City shows the recovered weapons of the NPA.

CAMALIG, ALBAY—ABOUT 60 NEW PEOPLE'S Army rebels assaulted an Army detachment and a cement factory in Batangas Sunday in the town at about 2 a.m. on Sunday.

Lt. Jonathan O Abo, commanding officer of the Army's 22nd Infantry Battalion based in Iligan City, said the attack could have been triggered by the refusal of officers of Goodfound Cement Corp. to pay "revolutionary tax" to the communist NPA.

The heavy detachment persists security in the cement plant, which has been underthreat of attack by the guerrillas.

Abo said the staff house and the bunkhouse of the cement factory workers were hit by an M-203 grenade launcher.

One of the factory workers, identified as Jared Fernandez, 29, a native of San Fernando, Cebu City, was wounded in the left ankle, while the roof of the bunkhouse was destroyed.

The Army recovered 75 "Molotov" improvised bombs, empty shells of M-14, M-16 and M-60 rifles, 11 pieces of fire-starting torch, and three unexploded grenades fired from the M-203 launcher.

No casualties were reported on the government side.

The Army said the NPA rebels might have suffered casualties, citing bloodstains found on the area. Abby Joan Orbeta, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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NEGOSYO

Pag-Ibig exec vows fast processing of applications for calamity loans

MISAMIS OCC—A TOP OFFICIAL OF THE Home Development Mutual Fund, popularly known as Pag-Ibig Fund, is fired-up checks for calamity loan applications filed in the morning were released to the afternoon.

Otto Gozon, Pag-Ibig regional manager, said members were allowed a loan equivalent to 80 percent of their total accumulated value payable in two years at 10.75 percent annual interest.

Gerald Jamito, head of the loans service, said applications would be accepted within a three-month period reckoned from Sept. 27.

The Pag-Ibig set up a satellite office at the Isang-gunting Pendahulugan here purposely to process calamity loan applications upon the request of Sec. Roberto Benabens.

Those who failed to file applications last week will have to file at the agency's regional office in Cagayan, Cotabato said.

Meanwhile, Ephesio "Mikiboy" tan only damaged people's car but also increased the already strained relationship between the Government Service Insurance System and its members.

This was admitted by GSIS Sorsogon branch manager Leonardo Lumbicuan following complaints from new members who had pending claims and those who wanted to avail of the calamity loan but whose application was could not be processed immediately due to a glitch in the agency's computer system.

Lumbicuan said the entire electrical and communication systems of their office were totally damaged, disconcerting them from the main communication system of GSIS which was needed for the processing of loans and claims.

Aside from the glitch, Lumbicuan said they also had to acquire an access code, which is automatically revoked after 15 days, from the main office in order to get through the system.

But since they couldn't communicate with the main office, he had to send an employee to Manila to get such a code.

After acquiring the code, computers had to be reset individually, he explained.

When Inquirer visited the GSIS office here Friday, a large number of prospect members were still awaiting word about their application and claims.

Lumbicuan said they just accepted loan applications and assured members that processing would be finalized once they go through the system.

GSIS is extending calamity loan of P50,000 to each member payable in three years, with eight percent annual interest per year.

GSIS members lamented that while they had to wait for time, loan applicants at the Pag-Ibig got their checks in a matter of hours.

Bobby Garbalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Mountain Province executives feud over ₱60-M loan used to build mall

BAGUIO CITY—OFFICIALS OF MOUNTAIN Province are feuding in court over a ₱60-million provincial loan that is being used to build the province's first shopping mall.

Board Member Marcial Lardizábal has gone to the regional trial court of Bontoc to see Gov. Maximo Dalog and his colleagues at the provincial board for alleged illegal processing a Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) loan without authorization.

The government is developing the Cliz-Ala area in the downtown area of Bontoc, the capital town, into a modern car park, bus terminal and mall complex.

Dalog, who chairs the Regional Development Council, had told reporters earlier that he needed to refute new information to drum up investments, after the province displaced Ifugao as the poorest province of the Cordillera in the latest economic report of the Regional Economic and Development Authority.

Lardizábal said the provincial government proceeded to bid out the construction of the Bontoc commercial complex before it could obtain funding for the project.

He told the court that bidding out a project before the government could secure funding "is illegal and irregular," and constituted "rigged bidding."

Vice Gov. Benjamin Chumaporo and the board members, in their Oct. 16 affidavit, said the bidding took place before the LBP approved the loan deal in January.

They said Lardizábal was misrepresenting the facts before the court.

"Lardizábal's allegation [is a deliberate falsehood ... The bidding process prior to the loan agreement and duly authorized by the Landbank and was even made a pre-condition for the release of the loan in its letter dated July 27, 2005," Dominguez said.

He referred to the July 27, 2005, letter of LBP-Bontoc manager Rodolfo dela Paz to Dalog.

It said, "Since the result of the bidding activity will be one of the 'pre-release' requirements of the loan, [the bank's lending arm] finally decided to advise your office to proceed with the bidding process ... according to phases of the proposed project in order not to hamper the actual release of the loan [at] the smooth implementation of the project."

In an Aug. 8, 2005, resolution, the provincial board ordered the bidding for the project's initial phase to proceed. The LBP formalized the loan agreement in January.

The loan was secured jointly by Dalog and Bontoc Mayor Alfonso Klang, linked on a no-lien income-sharing plan. Bontoc received administrative control over the facility.

The agreement obliges the provincial government to finance, construct and administer the underground parking area.

In their joint affidavit, the seven board members said Lardizábal was party to all the board deliberations that led to the ratification of Dalog's actions. Nestor Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

WOMEN riders in Barangay Talipa, Tingloy, Batangas pound "amay" rice while chanting to ease fatigue during their demonstration. —CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO-SANTOS

Farmers urged to plant native rice for export

BAGUIO CITY—AMMOSS SAVE MEN OF Ifugao to produce traditional rice varieties, not for local consumption but to meet the demand of the international market, according to a farmers' group in the Cordillera.

"There are farmers who are planting the indigenous varieties because they only want to enjoy and earn money," Andrew Phillen, vice-chair of the Apit Taku, said.

He said the government was buying the unmilled, or palay, for ₱50 per kilogram and exports it to the US. Some tons of the variety had already been shipped to the US, he said.

While the United States is buying premium rice Cordillera rice, the country is consuming imported rice varieties that could be a health risk because of their exposure to chemicals.

"We are consuming imported rice which is laden with pesticide and other contents are benefiting from any rice which is safe and has no chemicals," he said.

Aside from the imported rice varieties, the hybrid varieties have too much chemical fertilizers which would also be hazardous to health, Phillen warned.

The statement was made last week when farmers led by Apit-Taku marched on Bontoc Road here to denounce the government's continued importation of farm products.

Dionisio Awangan, chief of the agribusiness and marketing assistance division of the Department of Agriculture-Cordillera, said that although the government was supporting the importation of rice and campaigns for hybrid varieties, "we need to help organic rice varieties that are safe."

But, according to Phillen, the country is producing enough rice and that the government should not depend on importation.

In 2005, National Food Authority records showed that 402,000 tonnes of imported rice reached the Cordillera. Ifugao, which produces more than its domestic needs, had 40,000 tonnes.

The 2004 report of the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics showed that the Cordillera's rice output was more than enough for its 1.5-million population. Desiree Cabana, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Priest battling paper mill links threats to his crusade

BUTUAN CITY—A PRIEST LEADING THE campaign for the closure of the country's largest paper manufacturing firm, which is based in Cagayan, said he now lives for his life.

Pedro Arigo, parish priest of Buhig City in Surigao del Sur, said he had been receiving threats since he exposed the activities of Pulp Mountain Inc. (PMI), formerly known as Paper Industries Corp. of the Philippines.

Pabico was urging the government to stop the operations of PMI, which is based in Bislig, because the company was allegedly violating anti-pollution laws.

Domingo Tamondong, PMI spokesperson, said the company had no plans of harming the priest.

"We already filed a libel case against him for claiming we wanted him killed," Tamondong said.

Pabico said he had received "death letters" wanting him to tone down his attacks on PMI. "I'm very afraid of my security because it's clear they are determined to kill me," he told the Inquirer.

He alleged that the warnings were the "trademarks" of a PMI-backed death squad, which, he said, was notorious in the area for carrying out elimination of personalities opposed to the firm's operations.

Pabico said if he got killed, only PMI should be held responsible.

Pabico, local convenor of the multisectoral Kilusbayan Gabionan sa Bagabasan, said he would continue with his campaign despite the threats.

Citing a study conducted by researchers from the University of the Philippines, Pabico said the high level of toxic carbon and sulfur from the paper firm's processing plants had contaminated the water and air in the city and nearby towns.

He also said PMI has yet to fully comply with the Pollution Adjudication Board's June 30 order, which required it to put up a water and air treatment facilities there.

But Tamondong said the company had complied with the standards set by the Clean Air Act and the Solid Waste Management Act. Franklin M. Caligyad, Inquirer Mindanao

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Baguio ready to take over 3 mini-hydro plants in Benguet

BAGUIO CITY—THE CITY GOVernment is getting ready to take over the operations of three mini-hydro plants at near by Asin in Tuba, Benguet.

During its last regular session, the city council approved the Electric Utilities Development Corp. (Hedcor), which is operating the plants, 30 days to wind up its operations and inform its employees of this latest development.

The city government was expected to release the notice once negotiations with the Benguet Electric Cooperative (Benecot) became final and the city gets the assurance that Benecot will buy the power generated by the plants.

"We should get associates from Benecot that they will take the power. We can gain from this. Benecot charges us P7.50/kWh. We can pay Benecot with corresponding power from the Asin plants. But we must get their assurance that they will get the power from us," said Councilor Edilberto Bandoleros.

Under the present setup, Hedcor operates the plants and sells the bulk of the power to the San Fernando Light and Power Corp. in Pampanga, with a sharing scheme among the city government, the Baguio Water District (BWD) and Hedcor for all power generated.

The operations of the plants have been the subject of much discussions since a 25-year contract between the city government and Hedcor, which delegated operation of the plants to BWD, ended on Aug. 31.

With the termination of the contract but with the city government having no means or technical expertise to run the plants, Hedcor was tasked to continue operations until a more suitable arrangements could be had, the council said. *Dianna Bonoan-Bilo, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Heat on for early UN adoption of declaration on tribal rights

BAGUIO CITY—THE HEAT IS ON for the early adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the 101 General Assembly as leaders of indigenous peoples in the world start lobbying their governments to approve the declaration after more than 20 years of debate.

"I am pleased that the Philippine government, through Ambassador Lauro Baja, raised before the third committee of the General Assembly [on] Oct. 17 that it would adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," said Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in an e-mail from the UN headquarters in New York.

Corpuz, an Igorot leader from Mountain Province, said she was optimistic that more government representatives to the UN General Assembly who have been meeting since September, would finally vote on the declaration before the meeting ended in December.

In June, she assailed the Philippine government for shunning the declaration as well as among the few countries with a law on indigenous peoples, had missed the boat in endorsing a historic declaration," she said then, referring to the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA).

But how a matter of unequal nations on June 29, the Human Rights Council adopted the declaration by a roll-call vote of 30 to seven (no-votes), and 12 abstentions, which included the Philippines.

But the Philippine government finally changed its tune.

"The Philippines supports the much-awaited completion of the process to adopt the declaration, a global undertaking that had taken more than 20 years to develop," Baja was quoted by the UN Department of Public Information as saying during the deliberations on Oct. 17.

Corpuz and Rodolfo Stavenhagen, UN special rapporteur on human rights and fundamental freedoms, appealed to the General Assembly to "adopt the declaration without delay" in its current session.

"The declaration can help eliminate human rights violations, combat discrimination against, and address the marginalization of about 370 million indigenous peoples worldwide"

"The declaration will help build a truly universal human rights protection system that all peoples under the United Nations should indeed welcome," Corpuz and Stavenhagen said in a joint statement.

Corpuz said that although not legally binding, the declaration, once adopted by the UN General Assembly, would establish an important standard and "a significant tool" that can help eliminate human rights violations, help combat discrimination against, and address the marginalization of an estimated 370 million indigenous peoples worldwide.

The declaration would be one of the international standards that they could invoke when their rights were violated, Tauli explained.

"Indigenous peoples can definitely use the declaration as one of their tools for redress and justice," said Jovette Jocogan-Dianon, acting chair of the Kasalikway Cordillera, an organization of indigenous women in the Cordillera. *Maurice Malanes, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

THE ST. PETER'S Mission Church was demolished by contractors to pave the way for a government gymnasium in Mt. Province.

Court rules Anglicans can reclaim church land taken over by DPWH

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE SUNDAY SERVICE FOR an Anglican community in Sabangan, Mt. Province, finally has good news to share.

A regional trial court on Friday allowed about 500 Anglicans of Sabangan to rebuild their small church, which a contractor of the Department of Public Works and Highways had destroyed to make way for a public gymnasium.

In a decision, Judge Joseph Pattugan of the Bontoc RTC ordered the DPWH to suspend the gymnasium project after ruling that the church owned the land where it was being built.

At dawn of July 9, contractors hired by the DPWH bulldozed a single-story structure that served as the St. Peter's Mission Church for Sabangan's Anglican community.

The contractor proceeded to destroy the building on July 12, despite a May 29 court order stopping the project.

The Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines sued Leonardo Loyola, Mt. Province district engineer, and the contractor, Felipe Molnar.

Pattugan justified the same conclusion made in a May 30 ruling by Judge Jenny Kiblan of the Besao-Sabangan Municipal Circuit Court that the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Luzon had proprietary rights over the Sabangan lot where the metal canopy of the town gym now stands.

Quoting Albion, Pattugan ordered Molave "to remove at his own expense all improvements he may cause to be erected or introduced over the premises of the land in dispute without causing any irreparable and undue damage to the land and its premises."

In a letter to the diocese, Mt. Province Rep. Victor Dominguez, who funded the gymnasium project, said the church sent a malicious pose building donated to the Sabangan community by the Iglesia Filipina Independiente or Aglipayan Church.

Victor Antonio, assistant to Anglican Bishop Edward Malecdan of Bontoc, said the Sabangan Anglicans had been holding Masses before a makeshift tabernacle every Sunday, after Pitiquan stopped the DPWH from interfering with their "constitutional right to worship" while he hosted a case of "forcible entry" filed against the parishioners.

Antonio said the diocese would begin building a larger St. Peter's church in Sabangan, "regardless of whether the government will again appeal the decision before the Supreme Court."

"Our lawyers assured us it would be legal," he said.

EZ2 (All in exact order) Winning SUERTRES (Mid-Day) 8 6 2 | 0 8 6 (All in exact order)

SPORTS

SUPERLOTTO 6/49 5 16 37 42 49 PJ8,963,889.00

WELCOME? Jay-R Reyes tackles Coca-Cola's Jason Miranda for possession in last night's game. AUGUST SINCO

Kings find their Marks

Ginebra trips Alaska; Coke plasters Welcoat

AMBLER HOOP (Araneta Coliseum)
4:30 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs. Air21
7:30 p.m.—Purefoods vs. Sta.Digital

By Nicanor Cordilla

BARANGAY GINEBRA WON A CLOSE GAME for the first time since it became a powerhouse squad, and it took a little-human ground where Alaska did not respect so much to help pull off the job.

Left wide open several times as the big guns ran into double-teams last night, Mark Macapagal (3-for-5) in 17 fourth-quarter points as the Gin Kings completed a come-from-behind 95-91 decision of the foes in the 30th Tri-Nil PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

"It's a gamble they (Aces) took and we happened to make the shots," said Ginebra coach Jong Uichico, who heaped praises on a sitting-most-also-still-mostly-benched-in-brown-games.

"But this is one of those close games where we came out on top for the first time," Uichico added. "First close games we won, and it is a good sign that talks us that we can be there (to compete with the tough teams)."

The Kings rallied most of the way by notching, its own, in the first half, before gaining their seventh-straight win in the third period where they crept to within a basket of the hosts entering the fourth period.

After another block, Cagulangan sparkled for 14 third-quarter points to rally the Kings back. Macapagal recorded his 17 points built around a 4-of-7 clip from beyond the arc.

"They (Aces) doubled Mark (Cagulangan) and he was willing to give up that ball, and set Mac Macapagal up," Uichico said. "It wouldn't have been possible without the passes And he (Cagulangan) did a great job."

Late Sports

More Sports stories on A29-A32

Ginebra, which moved to solo second place with a 5-2 card, will now attempt to extend its winning streak to four games to consolidate some before last night's win.

Alaska, meanwhile, lost for the fifth straight time despite getting 16 points from former MVP Willie Miller and nets digits from five others. The Aces are now at 1-6 and still alone in the cellar.

In the second game, Chris Tiu-ano, a 6-foot, California born point guard relegated to the second list at the start of the season, hit the last four of his 14 fourth-quarter points inside the final 10.0 seconds to preserve a 92-86 victory by Coca-Cola over Welcoat.

Coca-Cola, down by nine (not with key men Ali Peek (knee injury), William Antonio (groin) and Neil Ivanico (family emergency) in circles, picked up its third win in seven games while dealing the fighting Dragons their third straight loss in a 2-5 card.

The scores:

First Game

ORA-SEA 88—Dangcong 21, Fonte 10, Argo 11, Ferrer 9, Miranda 8, Nelson 8, Rhoda 0, Pio 0, Quiroz 0

WELCOAT 86—Langitan 15, Wainwright 17, Salazar 10, Dallo 10, Lopez 7, Ildefo 8, Reyes 4, Ola, Mallo 3, Raguero 0, Lao 0, Abante 2

Quarters: 22-20, 28-15, 20-17, 19-34

Second Game

GINEBRA 95—Macapagal 28, Cagulan 27, Ahlo 20, Gonzalez 8, Menard 5, Angeles 5, Salvador 2, Wilkinson 2, Urbiztondo 0, Pinto 0

ALASKA 91—Miller 32, Dela Cruz 16, Perez 13, Caram 12, Velasco 12, Jaeger 11, Arana 0, Lazo 0, Lassiter 0, Bigornia 0

Quarters: 22-24, 42-42, 82-82, 95-91

Paba still quiet on Asiad fund deadline

By Jane Navarro

SOMEHOW IT'S ALL OVER FOR BASEBALL.

The deadline for the Philippine Amateur Baseball Association (Paba) to produce the funds needed to finance its Asian Games campaign passed the other day and nothing was heard from Paba president Hector Navarro.

"We haven't heard any thing from the Paba since Friday," said PSC commissioner Richie Garcia, deputy chef de mission of the Philippine delegation to the quadrennial meet slated Dec. 1-15 in Doha, Qatar.

"They just have to show the money and every thing will be fine. But right now, I guess their (baseball team) two bangs in the bathroom," he added.

Navarro was given by Philippine Sports Commission chair Jolly Gordon until last Saturday to come up with the 20 million needed to bankroll the 22-man baseball team to the brawl.

Ramirez couldn't be reached for comment but he made it clear Friday night that baseball would not be included in the SOP delegation if Navarro doesn't have the money by then.

Navarro was able to raise P900,000 and was hoping to also get the P600,000 the PSC promised as reimbursement for a baseball tournament it hosted last year.

Garcia said, however, that the amount is not enough since it would only cover the airfare of the team.

"They will still have to find money for the uniforms and allowances of the athletes and coaches," said Garcia.

Aplus METRO
Editor Rose G. Cipriano

Makati police go on worldwide web

Residents can soon report crime incidents through the Internet

By Tarra V. Quismundo

TO ENHANCE ITS ACCESSIBILITY to the public, the Makati Police Station will be going online early next month, launching its own website that will enable residents to report crimes using the Internet.

"People can lodge their complaints through the website and they can also log in more about the station, its personnel, its capabilities, and deployment among others," Supt. Gilbert Cruz, city police chief, told the Inquirer.

The station will also post its accomplishment reports online for public viewing, including how the police acted on each complaint filed through the Web, he added.

The Makati police website will be another step toward the station's full use of computer technology.

Recently, Cruz launched "Text-I-Chat," a project that will ensure that he is constantly in touch with his precinct commanders and station chiefs.

Using a computer software that links a personal computer to multiple mobile phone users, the program allows the top cop to simultaneously send text messages to his men out in the field.

The Makati police will next equip each precinct with intranet cameras to enable television broadcasting among officials for surveillance coordination during emergencies, Cruz said.

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'Disenyo' judges announced

By Tarra V. Quismundo

NATIONAL ARTIST NAPOLEON Abueva will be one of the judges in the "Unesco Mikoyo" art competition, launched earlier this month by the Mikoyo-Unesco Manila Council.

"Our office invited him ... Why not? He is a national artist," said MMDA General Manager Robert Barbers over the line.

The judging will be held on Sunday, Nov. 5, at the People Power Monument in Quezon City.

Joining Abueva is Teresita Castillo, Department of Environment and Natural Resources undersecretary for field operations.

A total of 16 entries have been submitted to the MMDA, which challenged people to turn trees felled by Typhoon "Milenyo" into works of art.

The first prize winner will receive P50,000; the second prize winner, P30,000; and the third place, P10,000.

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Coming soon: QC Polytechnic University

FLORAL DISPLAY
A vendor in Manila arranges her best floral displays as she waits for customers gueets to drop by her stall. RAUL LO

By DJ Yap

QUEZON CITY MAY SOON HAVE MORE funds for its priority projects, notwithstanding the non-approval of its supplemental budget for the year.

The 24-member city council last week approved on first and second reading the P1.3 billion budget to "sustain the gains the city has achieved" in the delivery of basic services and infrastructure development.

Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr., meanwhile, expressed his gratitude for the immediate and unanimous approval of the supplemental budget, and attributed the city's excellent fiscal performance to the "strong working relationship" between its executive and legislative branches.

He said the new appropriation shall be spent on additional priority projects, including the P80 million satellite campus of UCPU in Batasan Hills, the construction of a columbarium, crematorium and cemetery costing P192 million, and street lighting projects worth P100 million.

New buildings

Other additional projects are the P120 million fire and emergency rescue compound, and the P200 million Civic Center Building in the City Hall compound.

Some P155 million has also been allocated for the development of the Quezon Memorial Circle, and another P400 million for the construction of the new Quezon City Museum. Another P68 million has been appropriated for road and traffic signs.

The priority projects have been identified, reviewed and recommended to the mayor by the city's infrastructure and special committee for further deliberation before implementation.

NBI agents seize ₱30-M counterfeit designer shoes

By Margaux C. Ortiz

MORE THAN P30 MILLION WORTH OF counterfeit Lacoste footwear were confiscated in a raid conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in Pasay City last week.

NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division (IPRD) chief Jose Jurez Yap said his agents raided Sierra General Merchandise, located at the second floor of Shemie Mart on 5th Harrison St. after Lacoste local distributor filed a complaint.

The bureau operatives also raided the establishment's other stores at Stalls 191 and F30 in U-Need Shopping Center on Taft Avenue extension after obtaining a search warrant from Judge Aura Mojar of the Pasay City Regional Trial Court.

Trademark infringement

The establishment's alleged owners Hilton Gan, faces charges of trademark infringement and unfair competition, Yap said.

Seized during the raid conducted on Thursday were 8,473 pairs of fake Lacoste slip-ons sold for P400 each, the NBI official added.

"However, Lacoste has a total of P28,971,400 in profits because an original pair of Lacoste slip-ons costs P4,000 each," Yap explained.

In an earlier interview, agent Bernie Sobrevinas of the NBI-IPRD said Lacoste footwear distributors in the Philippines have become concerned with the recent proliferation of fake shoes and slip-ons in the country.

Latest styles

"The counterfeiters were able to imitate the latest styles of Lacoste shoes, even those that are still in the catalogues and have not been released in the country," Sobrevinas said.

He added that the fake shoes, which were brought to the Philippines from China, could be products of an "illegal transfer of technology."

"Because original Lacoste footwear are reportedly manufactured in the Far East, information about the shoe styles may have been leaked to counterfeiters," the NBI agent said.

METROBRIEFS

Robbers with toy guns arrested

THE METROBAN Bureau of Investigation has warned the public against a group of robbers operating in Quirino Avenue, Manila after agents nabbed two of its members last week. "The members of this robbery group strike at any time of the day, victimizing commuters and motorists alike," NBI Intelligence Special Operations Division (ISOD) chief Allan Contado said. Investigators find the suspects' other used toy guns to scare their victims. Arrested were Roland Cunda, 32, of Malate, Manila and Richard Bacos, 30, of Pandacan, Manila.

Mayan C. Ortiz

9-month-old boy needs help

NINE-month-old Clarence Rojas is suffering from bacterial meningitis, a serious infection of the fluid in the spinal column and that which surrounds the brain. His ailment, which has caused him to go blind, can be treated with antibiotics but Clarence needs at least P1500 a day for his medicine. His father, however, earns only P195 a day as a security guard. Readers who would like to help Clarence can call his grandmother, Lina Rojas, at 359-5662. Donations can be deposited in any BPI branch through account number 341-0010-505, under the name of Lina's employer, Arvina Bhavan. Lina also has another request: A crib for Clarence.

Citizen's call

To MS in regarding the Hyundai at the Capitol side of SOT: where is Mike Velarde would saintly sling the vassals along Damien, leaving the street flooded and all adrift. If needed, I appeal to the governor to clean and unclog the sewers. This used to be their job before the rainy season, and without rain, you can see the canals are clogged. Thank you and hope something comes out of this MM is Citizen's Call.

Bing Fernandez, Sr. Vice President, Sampaloc

THE QC DPWH should look into improper waste management of the Philippine Children's Medical Center. PCMC waste storage site is located just beside the sidewalk leading to our office and is potentially harmful to people. Highly toxic biochem or garbage juices that flow from it go directly to sidewalk, posing harm to us pedestrians and nearby communities. Please get the attention of authorities to relocate the PCMC waste storage site. Thanks.

Joseph Cardenas, 24, Office of the Ombudsman

BAKIT po binabayaan ng gobyerno ang mga barangay officials na magbuo ng mga kapit at bondying kung sinimulan ng Diardi St., malapit sa bahay ng Star Cinema sa Barangay 271 near Bonanza Mall? Ito ay gangrel na pagiging isolated, di ba? Makinig po po sa mga taxpayers. Salamat po.

J. Cortes, Bacoor, Cavite

DID YOU KNOW

THE MMDA frequently commented traffic violators last year was not wearing seatbelts or violating Republic Act 8750, also known as the Seatbelt Use Act of 1999.

Almost 8,000 motorists in Metro Manila were apprehended for violating the law with P2.9 million in fines collected.

Nationwide, there were about 140,000 apprehensions, earning the government more than P60 million in fines. Central Luzon had the highest number of apprehensions with over 33,000.

The second most frequent traffic violation was obstruction with over 61,000 cases.

Cpl. Jimabelle Joyce Cesario

why can't I come home?

– Rina Aquino

Dare to Make
It an Inquirer.
INQUIRER

Bush could wind up suffering sting of defeat

WORLDBRIEFS

CASTRO in footage released Oct. 30.

Fidel Castro walks, talks on state television

HAVANA—Convalescing Cuban President Fidel Castro appeared on state television twice this weekend, walking in Cuba and reviewing documents in his first public appearances in 40 days. "Now, when you enemies have unanimously declared me moribund or dead, I'm happy to send to our compatriots and friends around the world this short film footage," said Castro, 80. The Cuban leader walked unassisted in the two-minute video. Castro, in power since 1959, temporarily handed over the presidency to his brother Raul, 75, on July 31 as he recuperated from gastrointestinal surgery. AP

Egypt moves 5,000 troops near Gaza border

ISMAILIA, Egypt—Egypt moved 5,000 more security forces near the Gaza Strip border on Saturday after an Israeli report said Israel says border tunnels used for smuggling weapons into Palestinian territories, an Egyptian official said. The Israeli daily newspaper Maariv reported on Friday that precision-guided weapons would be used to penetrate deep underground in the hope of destroying the tunnel network that the Israeli state says violates the area, sometimes 1 mile long and approximately 100 meters wide. PHOTO

Fox sends federal police to Mexico's Oaxaca crisis

OAXACA, Mexico—Mexico sent a federal riot force to the troubled city of Oaxaca on Saturday after President Vicente Fox said police killed three people in violence sparked by a long-running protest to oust a governor. The government also ordered leftist activists in Oaxaca to immediately evacuate numerous streets, squares and buildings they have occupied along with striking teachers for some five months, saying that's all an increased police will. PHOTO

WASHINGTON... TWENTY-EIGHT years after his first campaign, George W. Bush is nagging his base. If the polls are right, the president could wind up experiencing the sting of defeat for the first time since that 1978 race.

Most of the attending campaigns in between have been close, and Bush's victories have hinged in part on his flair for crowd politicking that allows him to make personal connections with voters.

But the war in Iraq has driven Bush's popularity down to a point where he has had to avoid major public events and instead has appeared almost exclusively with party elites.

Still, Bush refuses to accept the notion Democrat victory in Washington that Republicans might lose the House and perhaps even the Senate. He runs all questions about the impact of a Democratic takeover and insists Republicans are going to win.

"This election is going to be determined by how our stockholders run locally. And I believe if they continue to emphasize the big issues—keeping taxes low and protecting the American people—we'll win," Bush said Friday.

He is doing what he can to help make that happen and certainly has more impact on the race than any other politician.

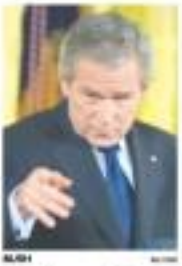
Bush has raised more than $193 million (some 152 million) so almost 90 covers this election season. He has posed with dozens of smiling candidates on the steps of the presidential jet Air Force One. He has eaten ice cream with a candidate who admitted to marital infidelity. He traveled across the country to sign a bill sponsored by Colorado Congressman Richard Pombo.

"By the likes of what we see behind the scenes, he's showing all the signs of a campaign season as when his son name is on the ballot," said Dan Bartlett, one of Bush's closest advisers.

Although Bush's fate is not as stake, the last two years of his term—and his legacy—is. Democrats control of Congress would surely hasten his lame-duck status. At stake in the Nov. 7 election are all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 33 of the 100 Senate seats.

Bush's campaign help for his party has so far come solely in the form of raising cash and appearing before the faithful. Many of those fund-raisers are closed to all media coverage.

By contrast, before the 2002 elections, a much more popular Bush began appearing at rallies in August. In October alone, he appeared at eight and nearly all of his political events, of any kind, were open to cameras and reporters. AP



BUSH

Bangladesh hunt for interim leader provokes riot

DHAKA—BANGLADESH PRESIDENT IAJUDdin Ahmed stepped in on Sunday to try to defuse an acute political crisis over the formation of a caretaker government to oversee the nation through its January general elections.

Islamist forces controlling the borders of feuding parties, seeking a way out of a confrontation which has already seen 18 people killed and hundreds injured in three days of street clashes in Dhaka and other towns and cities.

The president first intervened on Saturday, the day Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's five-year mandate expired and former Supreme Court chief justice K.M. Hasan was to have taken charge of an interim administration to prepare the national elections.

With opposition parties adamantly opposed to the arrangement, claiming Hasan was a government stooge, the former judge withdrew just hours before he was due to be sworn in.

"I was prepared to serve ... the sentiment is severe, but the level of mistrust between the political parties has made my position untenable," he said in a statement on Saturday.

"It is best I should stand aside rather than be a hurdle to the political process," Hasan added.

Analysts then proposed taking his place in a compromise that Khaleda's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) appeared to have but Awami opposition stalwart League rejected.

Under the constitution, Hasan, as the immediate past chief justice, is first choice to head the interim administration. If he declines or is deemed unfit, one of his predecessors, are above the age of 72, should be chosen instead.

Two other former chief justices—Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury and Hamidul Haque...ifs that category. The opposition said they had no objection to either of them. Reuters

The WORLD

Edsel Lawrence B. Dizon

Global warming could cost the world $7 trillion

Report also says 200M people may become refugees

LONDON—FAILURE BY GOVERNMENTS TO take bold action against global warming in the next decade could cost the world up to $6.98 trillion, a report warns.

Synopsis of a 700-page report to be released Monday by Sir Nicholas Stern, a former World Bank chief economist, also show that rampant climate change could cost 200 million people into refugees amid drought or flood.

The Observer weekly, which published the synopsis of a report it says is the first heavyweight contribution of an economist rather than a scientist on the phenomenon, also said failure to act would trigger a global recession.

"This will give us an argument to say to 3.68 trillion pounds (5.49 trillion euros, $6.98 trillion)

Unless the world acts, it says more than World War I, World War II and the Great Depression of the 1930s while wondering large parts of the planet uninhabitable, The Observer said.

Even if the world stopped pollutant immediately, it said, the slow-growing effects of carbon already in the atmosphere would continue to warm the planet for another 30 years, with sea levels rising for a century.

The Observer said Stern foresees that the world needs to spend one percent of its annual gross domestic product, or about 194 billion pounds, to fight off global warming, or find the cost to between five times and 20 times higher.

Because the problem is so pressing, a successor to the Kyoto agreement on reducing greenhouse gases that cause climate change should be signed next year, rather than in 2013-2012 as planned, his report warns.

It calls for an international framework in a bid to stabilize not only temperatures but gases per million of carbon in the atmosphere. It would allow different countries to reduce emissions differently.

Britain, for example, face the prospect of a whole array of green taxes, such as on driving and flying. AFP

FIERY CRAFT An air tanker flies through a smoky screen as the deadly Esperanza fire in the San Jacinto Mountains Oct. 27 near Banning, California. Four US Forest Service firefighters were killed and a fifth critically injured when a wall of flame swept over them on Oct. 26.

70 killed in Afghan raids—Nato

KABUL—NATO'S FORCE IN AFGHANISTAN said around 70 people were killed in raids targeting the Taliban this week but was still unsure how many were civilians after reports several of ordinary people died.

The International Security Assistance force admitted in a statement late Friday a "number of civilians were killed along with a large number of terrorists" in the Oct. 24 air strike in Kandahar province in the south.

"ISAF believes that around 70 individuals were killed," the statement said.

"We are satisfied that we identified and targeted a group of insurgents, but it is uncertain how many civilians were among the dead. In addition, it is unclear how many of the civilians were killed as a result of insurgent fire."

Nato's military commander Gen. James Jones apologized three day for civilian casualties in the province.

Jones blamed insurgents for the deaths, saying they had been using ordinary people as cover to evade ISAF fire.

"In this particular case, sadly there appears to have been loss of life and innocent people who were wounded in a legitimate mission where insurgents were using the cover of the civilian population to make it very difficult for us to get at them," Jones told reporters.

He was speaking in Bagram Air Base as the end of a three-day trip to Afghanistan during which he met President Hamid Karzai and military leaders.

Residents of the Shinjayal area in the province have said between 60 and 65 civilians were killed in the Lato night bombing raid, which started on the second day of the Eid holiday marking the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

Some have said most of the dead were Taliban, but ISAF has said it believed 48 were militants, including from a group that attacked them.

On Friday it said 12 of the dead were civilians, while the police put the figure at about 23 with a presidential-appointed commission and a separate ISAF and defense ministry team investigating the incident.

The latest incident, just under two weeks after 26 other civilians were reported killed in ISAF strikes in Kandahar and Helmand provinces, has added to concern about the number of locals being caught up in fighting between the Taliban and the military. AFP

UK cops seek ban on flag burners

LONDON—THE POLICE, FEARING THEY ARE perceived as too soft, are asking the British government to make flag-burning a crime as part of get-tough moves on Muslim extremists and others who cause religious hatred.

Tarique Ghaffur, the Metropolitan Police's most senior Muslim officer, told BBC radio that the proposal is among several submitted to Attorney General Lord Peter Goldsmith, the government's chief legal adviser.

Others include restrictions on the content of protest banners as well as a law on marks in order to prevent extremists from hiding from the police, said Ghaffur, who is the assistant commissioner in charge of public order in London.

"There appears to be a growing public perception that policing of demonstrations is unduly lenient," Ghaffur said. "That view was shared by last abusing crowds of all backgrounds."

"The reason this is a great country is the tolerance of people," he added.

If people "start to see images of people who seem to be 'getting away with it,'" then pressure to increase "reaction would," Ghaffur said.

The police wanted "a change in the law on the burning of flags—it makes that illegal," he said.

Last Goldsmith is preparing a package of announcements in November, according to a source close to the attorney general quoted by the BBC.

It said these are being debated among ministers over who will decide how far existing laws can be used more effectively and consider possible calls for changes to the law.

Ghaffur, who has been consulting with Lord Goldsmith, warned that senior officers are prepared to be firm with flag burners and extremists exploiting concern, whether or not the police appeals are heeded.

The senior officer told BBC radio that the proposals would be backed by the Muslim community because they clearly targeted the extremist minority.

He stressed that his proposal to prevent facts being covered during demonstrations was aimed at extremists who were hiding from the police rather than at women who wear the full-face veil, a topic that is not being considered.

Britain has been embroiled in an angry debate over the right for women to wear the veil since Cabinet Minister Jack Straw said earlier this month that he asked women to remove theirs when they visit his constituency office. AFP

Trucks' exhaust linked to asthma

NEW YORK—A NEW YORK UNIVERSITY study has found that elementary school students in the South Bronx—home to some of the highest asthma hospitalization rates for children in the city—were exposed to high levels of air pollutants.

With the South Bronx home to miles of expressways and truck traffic from some of the busiest wholesale produce, meat and fish markets in the world, students there are twice as likely to attend a school near a highway as were children in other parts of New York City.

In 18 of the 69 days taken over the three-year period in the Smith Bronx study, average daily exposure to fine particle pollution for a group of 36 children exceeded the EPA's standards, which will be set to 35 micrograms per cubic meter in December.

"I think it's an indicator that these kids are being exposed to very high fine particle concentrations on a fairly regular basis," said George Thurston, associate professor of environmental medicine at the NYU School of Medicine and one of the study's principal researchers. VVV

WHAT'S INSIDE
FEU in volley sweep; EAC Generals bag cage title/A30

SPORTS
E-MAIL: sports@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

Manilans dominate MY Games; QC 2nd/A31

Ramirez set to resign after Asiad

By Jane Navarro

WILLIAM "BUTCH" RAMIREZ doesn't want to be known as the most decorated chairman of the Philippine Sports Commission.

For him, to earn a name without a stain is good enough.

Ramirez yesterday confirmed reports that he would relinquish his post as PSC chief right after serving as Chef de Mission of the Philippine delegation to the 15th Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, on Dec. 1-15.

"Siguro sa akin, sinu-sa (It's enough for me)," said Ramirez, who will leave the PSC as its most successful chair after spearheading Team Philippines to its first Southeast Asian Games overall title last year.

Two years after taking over the PSC reins, Ramirez said he would formally file his resignation after the Asian Games. In fact, he had already told President Macapagal-Arroyo about it.

"The President knows it but what we talked about I can't divulge," said Ramirez. "I'm grateful to (President Arroyo and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo).

"Kung anu's nito, ang gusto ko nothing ang pagalis ko (If I leave, I want to keep my name clean)," added Ramirez, the seventh PSC chair after Gen. Hermenio Aquitcho, Apolinio Mosqui, Mel Lopez Jr., Philip Juico, Carlos "Starfy" Ramon and Eric Buhain.

Ramirez joined the PSC in 2000 as a commissioner during the Estrada administration. After Buhain ousted Garcia chair of the Games and Amusements Board, Ramirez appointed Ramirez an officer in charge of the PSC in January, 2005.

The 56-year-old Ramirez officially became PSC chair on July 17last year. Under his watch, the Philippine sports institute was evolved and a unified sports program was implemented.

AGAINST: If I leave, I want to keep my name clean

The improved relationship between the PSC and the Philippine Olympic Committee, the creation of bilateral sports ties with China and the improvements of the athletes' welfare were among his accomplishments.

But the greatest legacy Ramirez will leave behind was as Chef de Mission of the RP team that won the overall championship of the 2005 SEA Games that the Philippines hosted last year.

Ramirez said he plans to return to his hometown in Davao City upon more time with his family and work for the Sports for Peace program of Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.

Being floated as his possible replacement were PSC commissioners Ritchie Garcia, former commissioner Roy Raquero and President's adviser on sports and youth Al Amatong.

Gomez, Taiwan bet make it to WPC

THE PHILIPPINES' Roberto Gomez and Chinese Taipei's Wen Sung-chih topped the first two qualifying sessions on Sunday to make it to the main draw of the 2006 Philippine World Pool Championship slated Nov. 4 to 12 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

The 20-year-old Gomez, known to the local billiards scene for his unrivaled run in the tourney pairs, outscored Ji Sung-ki of Japan, 9-6, in the 5-rack-of-the-five session at the Star Billiards Center in Cinco Village in Quezon City.

Wen outscored Chiew Chin-lu, 9-4, in the all-Taiwanese final of the second session to advance to the group play on Nov. 4.

The duos are still up for grabs in the series of qualifying sessions prior to the World Pool Championship, where 113 of the game's finest players here or their home countries have pre-qualified.

The third session, currently being played last night with PR prince Leonardo Andres, Ramon Efraloa and Ismael Bora vying for the single seats drew elite a stake.

Dennis Orcollo, the 1A/165P entry in the single-ball event that offers $100,000 to the champion.

Orcollo, who is 6-rack, outsmart Ismet Japan's Shuuki Kasuto, 7-5, and Yenzo Takano, 7-6, two-time World Junior's 9-ball champion Ruslan Iaiu, 7-5, and fellow Filipino Rubilen Amit, 7-5, and Warren Gomez, 7-2.

Among Wen's victims were NPC miner Mac Dorie, 7-4, and Filipino Dennis Wika, 7-5, and Jun Wen Genzon, 7-1.

Marvin Bernardino, Correspondent

The Zone tops Battle of Courts badminton third leg

JJ. DE JESUS AND IAN DIONISIO RECOVERED from an opening-set loss to beat Jopet Sison and Hanno Lotti, 12-21, 23-15, 21-17, in the deciding mixed doubles play as The Zone survived a game RSC-Premier, 2-1, yesterday to rule the third and last leg of the Battle of the Courts badminton tournament at the Las Piñas Badminton Center.

It is a rematch of the finalists of the inaugural Battle of the Courts two years ago. The Zone of Malaut re-asserted its might anew with long-time partners de Jesus and Dionisio savouring the clincher after both teams split the first two matches.

RSC-Premier put The Zone in a bind when Marc de Zulueta-Yabao Go crossed Ruby Antona/Alvin Bulfavarra, 21-15, 21-10. But The Zone bounced back through in-laden-doubles exercise of Chris Hill, Ian Bunsal, who outlasted Noreen Go and Romulo Tan, 17-19, 21-15.

The Zone and RSC-Premier reached the finals by sweeping DCSC and Manila Polo, respectively, in the semifinals of the event presented by Saab Filoil Petroz. Sucrose Badminton and Mizuno had sponsors.

The other sponsors of the Battle are Sony Ever Philippines, Bib mediated optics, Unilever and Get-Her Tuesday as the official mat. Radio partners are Wave 89.1 and 93.1 Easy.

The last four qualifiers will join eight other squads who had earlier clinched slots to the finals. They are Manila Polo, Valle Verde, Club 65 and Racquet Penguin from the second leg and Peregrine, Cosmo Athletic, Philippine National Police and Alabang Racquet Club.

DCSC and Manila Polo topped Group 1 with 4-0 and 3-1 win-loss records, respectively while RSC-Premier and The Zone tied for the top spot in Group 2 with 3-1 slates.

Already assured of slots to the semis, The Zone and RSC-Premier did not show up for their elimination match. RSC-Premier, however, took the No. 1 slot after a coin toss.

FEU caps UniGames romp with volleyball title sweep

By Cedell P. Tupas
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—FAR EASTERN UNIversity punctuated an awe-inspiring performance with another volleyball sweep yesterday even as Emilio Aguinaldo College clinched its third men's basketball crown in four years at the close of the 11th National University Games here.

The Tamaraws unbeaten Philippine Christian University 25-20, 25-18, 25-18, to less than an hour to crush their title, before the Lady Tamaraws rolled off a scrambling 25-11, 25-15, 25-14, 25-22 win over the Santa Teresita volleyballers at the St. La Salle College covered court.

The twin kill linked the Tamaraws' to do hard to five in the wrestling Games. FEU also topped men's badminton and men's table tennis and women's athletics and missed the men's athletics title only by a single point.

De La Salle, holding a total of 11 squash bars, and College of St. Benilde claimed second overall with three championships.

The Archers claimed a record eighth straight title in women's football, following victories in women's swimming and women's chess, while CSB swept men's divisions in lawn tennis and ruled women's table tennis.

Host St. La Salle retained its men's football crown and reigned supreme in sepak takraw. Also making their pens, since 6th were Ateneo de Manila (women's football) and Bida (men's swimming), University of the East (men's taekwondo), Siaton Tamas (men's athletics) and John B. Lacson Colleges Foundation (women's taekwondo).

In the last match of the Games, the Tamaraws came on a first quarter burst to draw away to a relatively easy 75-47 win over the Adamson Falcons at the St. La Salle Coliseum.

Ronjay Buenafe registered for the Cavaliers with 26 points, while Alain Bhanzi and Ebenezer Bitoon added 25 and 24, respectively.

MEMBERS of the Emilio Aguinaldo College squash celebrate their third victory in four years in basketball. INQUIRER/VISAYAS

Miñoza ties for 15th with 4-under 68

MIÑOZA

TOKYO, JAPAN—Frankie Miñoza regained his footing on the front nine of the final round Sunday, shot a four-under par 68 and finished in a tie with 15 for 15th place in the ¥120,000,000 NEC Championship here.

Miñoza, who had a disastrous 74 after opening with a 67 Thursday, the 47-year-old top Filipino shotmaker rallied with birdies on four of his last six holes on the par-72 ASC Golf Club course here.

He hit the cut with a 71, dropped a stroke on the par-3 14th but recovered it with another birdie on the 18th.

Miñoza wound up with a 72-hole total of four-under 284 to earn ¥3,276,000 (about $30,000) in the 29th of 29 legs on the rich Japan Golf Tour. He is expected to move up from his previous ranking of 44th with total earnings of ¥39,621,427 to list.

Defending champion Shingo Katayama of Japan struggled his way with a respectable rally shooting a tournament best 67 for step ping 19 ting of Taiwan in a playoff after both had finished tied for first at 17-under 271.

Katayama, the interior figure on the course with his cranky but, had earlier rounds of 71-70-63. Yang, who led the first round with a 66 then carried 71-69, closed out with a 65.

SPORTSWATCH

Top AFI drivers to guest in PSA Forum

AFTER THE WILL AT TIMOTHY AGUAS FERRARA'S THIRT STREET DRAG RACING Series ends in the last four rounds of the 2006 racing season on Oct. 4 and 5 at the Batangas Racing Circuit. Majority of the drivers vowing action in the last legs of the series will be guesting at a special edition of the PSA Forum to be held at the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. After guesting at the 10:30 a.m. session organized by Ferrara, Ramon Wayne I. de Ocampo and Manila Sports Council board Ali Atienza are officials of the AFI led by driver Eddie Ilo. He, team principals and coordinators to the Ali's biggest

90 fights set in SJC derby today

ALL FOURTEEN (14) TO THE MAXIMUM COLISEUM TODAY AS THE CHARTS Coach Hagedorn Kobo AP at 8 p.m. featuring 90 fights with Sagupaan Commissioner Bill Lesaca EGAP as main attraction. Invited by hotel Shun Ateneo de Naval Felipe are regular derby participants from Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Bulacan, Olongapo, Zambales, Pangasinan and Pampanga. Interested individuals or coaching teams for inquiries, call 725-0350 or 725-0800. Meanwhile, provincial Bulan Police will host the "Bisaya Big Lab" 4-day derby this Thursday. Entry deadline is on Wednesday. Prize and 10 boxing gym-trainer boosters have confirmed their participation. Also invited as LGU in the elimination round of the National Kalbaryo Di Bago Derby are Iriga

BBC 'Bakbakan' 2nd elims up at Big Dome

TOURNAMENT ON THE ISLAND AT TODAY AND 8 & 10 CONNECT BAKBAKAN round of the Bahagua Brothers Cup's national Bakbakan preliminaries at the Big Dome in Quezon City. The 8:30 p.m. main event features Jerry Pacquiao and Jaime Bakbak of Kibaw formerly from the provinces of Bicol, Laguna, Cavite, Batangas and Quezon then at last 7 p.m. The first part of this two-stage event, held on Wednesday at the Bakbakan Coliseum, produced 24 those punches out of 32 entries, led by Cavite's Joseph Amparo and Laguna's Jason Sarmiento. Those who missed the cut will have another shot here. Others coming in 7 p.m. first Lands. Also producing thrilling performances were Manny Pinto with his entry, Bakbakan MCU, Dennis and Dino. For DBC Kalbaryo, Manny Ordonez (Sir Dennis) and Jose Sauzar (Jr from My Mistress), among others.

Baguio runners rule Milo La Union race

BAGUIO PERSONALITY CITY, LA UNION—Runners from Baguio City dominated the regional leg race of the 2006 Milo Marathon here yesterday.

Mamer Tumala, a security guard of Habitat Area Investigation and Detective Services in Baguio, and Fernann Southeast Asian Games veteran Merlita Cuchiet-Carmen topped the 21K qualifying race.

The 24 year-old Tumala, who led from start to finish, clocked one hour, 11 minutes and 29 seconds in capturing his first leg title in the annual footrace held in partnership with Bayanan Bayl Food Manila, Manila, Cebu Pacific, Department of Tourism and Fiesta Inn.

Jaypee Mendoza Catalan (1:16:49) and Jaime Jimenez (1:16:51) placed second and third, respectively.

Carmen, a physical education teacher at Union National High School, finished the women's race in 1:22:19 and was actually the fifth

MARCELO

CARMEN

2:39 runner to cross the finish line in front of the San Fernando City Hall.

Florida Jay Jimenez was second in 1:40:08 and Rachel Peña came home third in 1:43:04.

The top three finishers in the men's and women's events made it to the national finals slated Dec. 10 in Metro Manila.

Schools Motorcade and Allen Agent also of Baguio City captured the men's and women's titles in the 10.5K race.

Diamonds caught the Sudaya brothers, 18 year-old Hector and 17 years old Giovanni, a near lesson in their respective events by topping the race in 16 minute 22 seconds. Behind them in 20 seconds later was Jakewesh Jacob by Giovanni.

Ajuan, on the other hand, was seriously underdogged, finishing in 20:32. Behind her Pedrito Pedrito Jr. at 21:05 and Marilyn Simmons was third at 22:34.

In the kiddies 3K race, Rene Aquino and Jenel Bangay prevailed in the 6-9 age group and Marian Bautista and Larry May shone in the 10-12 category.

San Fernando City Mayor Mary Jane Ortega fired the gun that flagged off the 1,500 runners. She later helped Milo Sports Events executive Ed Chan ring in awarding the trophies and medals to the top 10 winners in each race category.

The 25th race in the year's 10-leg schedule will be held in Iligan City this Sunday.

Paragua lifts Agusan A to inter-province lead

GENERALTRIAS: MARK BRIANUS defeated Nal Oliver Barbosa to lift Agusan Del Sur 'A' to a 2.5-1.5 victory Saturday over overnight solo leader Cagayan del province and grabbed the lead after the fifth round of the National Inter-Provincial Chess Tournament at the Limbaloa Multi-Purpose Center.

Agusan 'A' now has 4.5 points in this nine-round Swiss match point open format.

Christian Antopo trounced defend Rosario on board 4 while Hans Labay drew with Rhinapingal Pagsinal on board 3. Ismid Rivera saved a point for Bicol by crushing Jasmine Lim on board 2.

Bicol was stuck at 4.0 points and dropped into a tie for second place with Tagaytay City's Jose Sabas, Surigao del Sur, Tagaloan and Tandag Chess Circle.

GM Rogelio Antonio Jr. led defending champion Tagaytay to a 3-1 win over Bukidnon GM, Rogelio Barcenilla Jr. who humiliated by IM Ronald Dableo, topped Masonic Oriental 3, 2.5-1.5.

GM Nelson Mariano II promoted Zamboanga to a 3-1 win over Bohol. Alberto Bernardino

No beauty contest for macho Morales

THE ARTS AFTER ELIMINATING 14½ pounds, Erik Morales rode the scales and weighed-out amazing 1 127 lb.

The way how Top Rank boxeran fish team related the fantastic development in breakout to Santos Starbucks last week.

Team matter sounded as though he had discovered a metabolism of reserved weight inside Mexikan agent body.

"Manny Pacquiao would be to let a big opponent," decision question morning.

Maybe team expected Pacquiao to shoulder fallout?

Well, if Pacquiao did not end up laughing, he must've brushed off team's statements as nonsense lie.

Arum did not indicate if he had personally decided Morales at the scales.

* * *

The grand old man of prizefight promotions drove out for Mall Pacquiao. He could, in fact, be requesting what he had witnessed.

But it was easier to believe Arum, this time out, had made Morales ride a shaky, temptation-laced weight-watching machine.

Yes, if Morales had instantly lost five pounds in five days, he could be in for deep trouble. It's like this: Morales registering 130 on an official machine must unload by a count for every among his backers and close supporters who know their boxing.

* * *

So, Arum couldn't be accused of deluding himself. So definitely knows his boxing, you don't need King.

BARE EYE

Ricardo Trinidad

But wasn't Morales progressing normally, shedding poundage carefully and gradually, under the supervision of experts?

At least, this was what we were made to believe before Morales moved up to the Outer Mongolian training site in Mexico from his camp in Los Angeles.

* * *

Meanwhile, around this same time, Pacquiao jumped onto the scales and registered 130 lb.—most shoes, shorts and shirts on.

Trainer Freddie Roach must claimed his prized pupil was really 130 lb.

That would mean Morales was nothing more than a pound behind Pacquiao in the area all in their first 17-official outright in.

* * *

Now, there was every reason for Arum to be triumphant.

But, at the same time, he could be dangerously trapped in that elusive when he had shortened whether the Grand Finale would be decided at the weighing scales.

No kidding. The arm was the first time that had been said of how fighters would also get overly sensitive with their weight and figure.

In the process, those same fighters overlook the fact that making the weight and staying in fighting shape is not easy and the same thing.

* * *

Listen, please. Arum could be perfectly happy only if Morales would be joining a beauty pageant, and not going to war, which pertains to the fitness to fight in a contest.

So, did they have to punish Morales?

Five pounds in five days was not exactly normal, based on the announced Morales regimen.

Morales may indeed look great, he could have put the official scales, but how much of his cash-cow fighter would be left in his old, drained system?

* * *

In sport, Morales won't be joining a beauty contest.

Retired police superintendent Tee Hiok of Hotch Gotchim: "Hoy! If it would be a beauty contest, Morales would just walk down the ramp after all the shocking and the trimming down. But it's not. It would be a mistake in the jungle. Mabilaping bagbagan ayan. Let's see if he could survive there."

Sugi, Pilot manager. Salazar and property should have been the name of the Morales regimen. No quick fix, no cutting corners, please.

Anyway, it was just fine for Arum to have warned Pacquiao to watch out—Morales is the dangerous opponent.

But did the Top Rank big boss sincerely believe the flyweight would be derailed over silly weight woes?

Manilans dominate MY Games; QC 2nd

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MANILA DOMINATED DIFFICULTIES do not expected to cop its runaway overall victory in the 2nd Manila Youth Games meet as the annual multisectoral last night at the San Andres Sports Complex.

The host city, which pulled away beyond reach at the end of track and field competitions on Thursday, showcased its strength in the sixth and last sport disputed by climbing home of the 11 gold medals it racked overall.

The Big City athletes collected 134 golds overall on top of 37 silvers and 24 bronzes, handily beating Quezon City which finished with a gold-silver-bronze haul of 25-22-22.

Laguna was third with 16-4-6, followed by Baguio City 9-10-10, Muntinlupa City 9-12-11, Cavite City 7-12-7 and Taguig City 5-1-8.

Regina Lumbo kicked off Manila's taekwondo romp with a win in the grade school girls' 135.1-kilogram division over Ishwari Mangubat of Pasay City.

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Regina Lumbo kicked off Manila's taekwondo romp with a win in the grade school girls' 135.1-kilogram division over Ishwari Mangubat of Pasay City.

Quezon City plucked two taekwondo through Hannah Mendoza (grade school girls' 145.1-Over) and Regina Lumbo (grade school boys' 135.1-kg).

Also winning in the grade school girls' division were Heidi Pega of Cavite in the 120-cm-under, Chitky Villanueva of Tagaytay in the 129-136 cm, and Anne Nogrid in the 131-140 cm.

Prevailing in the grade school boys' were Joshua Daniel of Muntinlupa in the 120 cm-under, James Cruz of Muntinlupa in the 129-136 cm, and Gerry del Rosario of Cavite in the 141-150 cm.

Manila won 34 golds in athletics, with Quezon City managing to wave 11 at the Rizal Memorial Stadium. Other sports played in the Games were softball, baseball, football and badminton.

Candon City powered a revolution by grabbing seven golds in track and field despite missing out 11 athletes.

Rhealyn Barrios put a hire in Candon City's bronze showing when she was named the "Best Athlete" of the week-long meet after winning three gold medals in the girls' 12-under baseball throw, 100-meter dash and long jump.

The luncheon winner, who was given a scholarship by MVP, chief organizer Ali Atienza, amassed 48 points.

Pagsa Jean Santa Miranda (24.5 points), a five-gold medal winner for Manila in the 13-15 class, and Rolando de Guzman (20.5 points), the host city's 15-17 hurdles ace bagged five golds.

HURTLING LOW: Mariner duke Santos (red) unleashes a roundhouse kick against Paralaquan's James Paul Lomos in their gold-medal match. Duke Santos won.

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A. PINEDA MEDICAL CLINICS

Tagaytay Spring five zaps Cellular in OT

CALAMBA, LAGUNA—TAGAYTAY Spring needed every inch to shake off a two-week lull and overcome Cellular Slumberjay, 103-98, Friday night in the 2006 Spring Cooking Oil-NBC Interleague basketball tournament at the Lemon College gymnasium here.

With Cellular holding a 94-91 edge on the 3:02 mark in overtime, Allen Caguioa, who led all scorers with 28 points, drilled in five straight markers to give the Tagaytay dribblers of NBC point Ariel Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and his executive VP Mayor Sinclair Tolentino, the host by good.

Lanky Pinoy Ex-ace Andrew Ishiad tried to get Cellular freeze-drop hands on the driver's seat, but Montalto and Marc Egerdahl combined to add to the crowd's bid.

It was the fourth win in five games for Tagaytay.

Cellular remained in the cellar with a 0-5 card.

The scores:

TAGAYTAY (98) - Alvarez 0, Ignacio 14, Quintana 10, Dizon 4, Ishiad 8, Gerdin 2, Blabel 7, Tenkiat 7, Tiu 3, Quintero 4, Ocampo 3, Serrano 2.

CELLULAR (98) - Go 20, Tungcar 0, Salut 15, Bakrie 11, Ko 0, Uno Tan 6, Asuncion 6, Chan 6, Vergara 0, Chua 2, Aclan 2, Salgado 2, Santos 0.

Quarters: 23-19, 47-50, 80-81, 98-98

RP golfers hopelessly outclassed

AUSPICIOUS BASE for the Eisenhower Cup shaped up after a torrid opening in the first round but left the Philippines hopelessly outclassed in the World Amateur Golf Team Championship in Stellenbosch, South Africa, on Saturday.

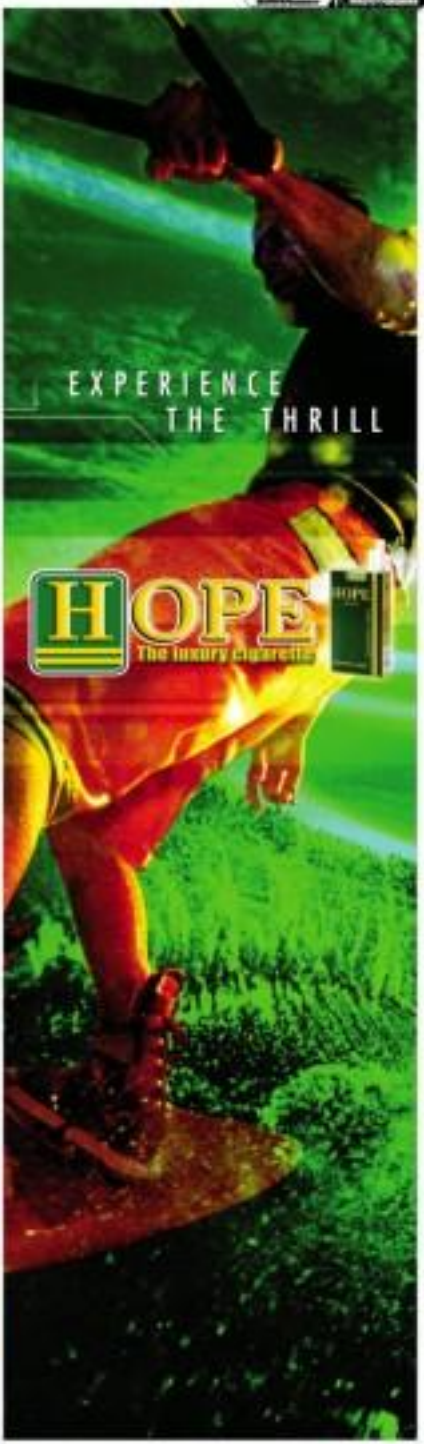
The Netherlands marched ahead with one-under backdoor defending champion United States, Canada and host Hong-changing Wales with an eight-under par score of 136 for a 417 total.

Wales came through with the day's best score of 1 52 to jump from 15th to joint second at 419 with the Americans, who had a 140 for the day, and the Canadians, who turned in a three-under 141.

Brad Hurin also topped within striking distance with a 138 for the day and a 411.

But the Filipinos could do no better than a 10-over 354 with Jay Bayron carding a 73 and Michael Bibat on 81. The other Filipino, Marvin Sabinasalan, fell out of contention.

The Filipinos stood in a tie for 43rd with Zimbabwe with a 426.



Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

SPORTS

His victory cigar transcended everything

BOSTON—IN THE DAYS BEFORE THE SURGEON general's warning, it would have been more unthinkable. If an incendiary Celtics victory weren't heralded by plumes of smoke emanating from a cigar that was roughly as large as the team's lead.

The man doing the contented puffing, of course, was Red Auerbach. Not he wasn't recently furnishing his successor by indulging in his favorite vice. As so often was the case, there was far more to Auerbach's symbolism than the obvious. To Red, a good smoke was as much a matter of unwinding as taste. This was the protector to trash talking, calm trash talking.

Auerbach had offered two explanations of the victory-cigar's purpose.

He once told Bee Globe, "It's like this: I get sick and tired of coaches playing for the TV. They'd be 20 points ahead with two minutes to go and they'd be calling plays, wasting their asses, showing off. My feeling was, when you know the game was over, then sit down and shut up.

"Back then, a lot of the coaches smoked. I don't like cigarettes—never touched 'em. But I do like a good cigar."

Especially if it caused his adversaries to choke on the fumes. Back once the situation with the other explanation for the advent of the victory cigar, as Auerbach explained to Sports Illustrated:

"Years ago, when [the NBA hierarchy] were picking on me for a hundred different things, I tried to think of something to aggravate them. They were always right.

"I figured a cigar all of a sudden. I got a taste. It doesn't look good for you to smoke cigars on the bench." I told them I'd stop when the other coaches stopped smoking cigarettes.

"Some of the zombies got aggravated. They thought I was hurting it over there. The cigar is a sign of relaxation. The cigarette is a sign of tension. I explained to them that it was an endorsement, that I get money and all the cigars I can smoke. That calmed them down. Why stop a guy from making a buck? However, the time I think that it actually flung."

For good reason. Whatever its intent, Auerbach's triumphant gesture made an astounding impact.

It even transcended planetary limitations. As Auerbach ensconced in the Globe, "It became a charismatic thing. Years later, even the astronauts were talking about 'Red's victory cigar.' I got a real kick out of that." UPI News Service

IT WOULD always the opponents, the way Red Auerbach would relax at the end of the lopsided and puff on a cigar in every home game where a Celtics victory was imminent.

Red, 89

Architect of greatest basketball dynasty dies of heart attack

WASHINGTON—HIS GENIUS WAS BUILDING a basketball dynasty in Boston, his gift was straight talk, his signature was the pungent cigar he lit up and savored after every victory.

Red Auerbach, the Hall of Famer who guided the Celtics to 16 championships—first as a coach and later as general manager—died Saturday. He was 89.

Auerbach died of a heart attack near his home in Washington, according to an NBA official, who asked want to be identified. His last public appearance was on Tuesday, when he received the US Navy's Lone Sailor Award in front of family and friends at a ceremony in the nation's capital.

Auerbach's death was announced by the Celtics, who subsequently hung his team president. New season will be dedicated to him, they said.

Auerbach's 938 victories made him the winningest coach in NBA history until Lenny Wilkens overtook him during the 1994-95 season. His nine titles as a coach came in the 1950s and 1960s—including eight straight from 1959 through 1966—and then through shrewd deals and foresight he became the architect of Celtics teams that won seven more championships in the 1970s and 1980s.

Auerbach was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1969. The jersey No. 2 was retired by the Celtics in his honor during the 1984-85 season.

With the Celtics, he made deals that brought Bill Russell, Bob Cousy, Tom Heinsohn, Bill Sharman, K.C. Jones and Sam Jones, all inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Phil Jackson coached Auerbach's record nine championships when the Los Angeles Lakers won the title in 2001-02. AP

TREVOR Berbick (left), was the man who last fought Muhammad Ali and who Mike Tyson used as his first step to success.

Former heavyweight champion found dead

KINGSTON, JAMAICA—FORMER heavyweight boxing champion Trevor Berbick was found dead in a church courtyard Saturday with cuts apparently to his head in a suspected homicide.

Berbick, who was believed to be 52 and was beset by legal problems following his retirement from the ring, lost his heavyweight title to Mike Tyson and was the last boxer to fight Muhammad Ali.

Berbick's body was discovered about 8:30 a.m. in his hometown parish of Portland, constable Devon Hassell said. He was pronounced dead by a local doctor in the courtyard. Police are treating Berbick's death as a homicide, Inspector Victor Henry said.

After beating Ali in 1981 in an unanimous decision in the Bahamas, Berbick went on to win the WBC heavyweight title four years later in a decision over Pinklon Thomas.

He reign was short, however, as a 23-year-old Tyson knocked Berbick out in the second round of their bout on Nov. 22, 1986, to become the youngest heavyweight champion in history. AP

BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

Higher growth, lower inflation seen till '07

INQUIRER MONITOR

GDP growth bolstered by Agri sector performance
(2nd quarter of 2006)

Private economists more optimistic on economy

By Doris C. Dumlao

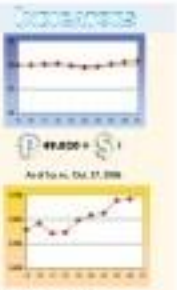
THE PHILIPPINES CAN ATTAIN HIGHER ECONOMIC GROWTH and lower inflation rates this year and in 2007 than what had been expected a quarter ago, according to results of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' latest survey of private financial institutions monitoring the country.

The BSP's third-quarter survey among 17 private institutions indicated that the average inflation forecasts for 2006 and 2007 were significantly revised down in view of softening global oil prices and a strengthening peso.

The average inflation forecast for 2006 in the latest survey declined to 6.6 percent from 6.9 percent in the previous quarter, the BSP said in a report released Friday.

For 2007, the average forecast also went down to 5.3 percent from the previous quarter's 5.7 percent.

"Most analysts cited the easing in world oil prices and the strengthening of the peso as factors that could help limit price pressures. The favorable outlook for the agriculture sector is also expected to keep down food inflation," [illegible]



Bullish run seen to continue

[illegible]

DRIVE VS TAX CHEATS

BIR taps barangay execs

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue will tap the assistance of barangay captains in going after tax cheats and shoring up revenue collections.

Being more familiar with the businesses that operate in their barangay, the BIR said these local executives were in a position to provide taxpayer information to the BIR.

The move to ask assistance from barangay captains is part of the BIR's Tax Enhancement Solution Economic Stability Drive) program, which is being pushed by Rep. Herminio Teves of the House committee on ways and means.

Under the Teves program, one of the measures aimed at helping the IGR plug its shortfall and meet its full-year tax collection goal is for the BIR and local government units (LGUs) to cooperate closely.

The information that the BIR could get from LGUs will help make it determine who are the unregistered businesses or who are under-declaring their incomes. On the other, LGUs benefit because they get a share of the revenues collection by the national government through the IRA.

Under the National Internal Revenue Code, 65 percent of the national government's revenue collections for a year should be set aside

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Stanchart expects 48.50:$1 rate early next year

BRITISH BANKING GIANT STANDARD Chartered Bank says the peso further climbing to 48.50:$1.00 by the first quarter of 2007 on the back of the country's strong external position.

The peso is now trading at its strongest in over four years, closing at 49.62 against the US currency on Friday.

Standard's Hong Kong-based economist Francois Cheung, in a visit to Manila last week, noted that following the deficits in April and May, external payment had returned to surpluses since June, supported by sustained inflows of overseas Filipino workers remittances and foreign direct investments.

She said an increasing number of OFWs should support remittance inflows in the months ahead, while exports were likely to stay strong.

"Looking ahead, we expect economic [illegible]

UPS eyes Clark for intra-Asia warehousing hub

By Rica T. Olchondra

CLARK, PAMPANGA – UNITED Parcel Service (UPS), a $60.6-billion package delivery and supply chain solutions provider, is considering putting up a warehousing hub in the Philippines to serve the growing demand for supply chain solutions in Asia-Pacific.

Strategic location, highly skilled people still RP's biggest advantage

Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, UPS serves more than 200 countries and territories worldwide.

UPS country manager for supply chain solutions Mark B. Khambatta said in an interview that management was very much interested in expanding in the Philippines, the decision to extend how much investment was being considered, but said "a substantial amount" would be needed to put up a warehousing hub at the Clark Special Economic Zone.

Khambatta said the warehousing hub would complement the company's existing serving and distribution centers in Clark.

The UNIS square meter facility is currently focused on storage and delivery of consumer electronics products from 22 assembly and distribution centers in Clark.

On a weekly basis, Philippines deliveries account for only 10 percent of the hub's massive serving and distribution index from 1.16 terapoflops.

UPS' local is in such concert with those of Federal Express (FedEx), another global delivery and logistics company, which is closing its regional consolidation hub at the Subic Freeport Zone in December 2006.

Khambatta said UPS believed the Philippines' strategic locations, the highly developed language skills of the people and government support would make further investments bring positive results for both the country and the company.

Its location, alone, makes the Philippines very attractive as it enables UPS to deliver a package to any Asian country from anywhere in the world within 24 hours of receipt at Clark.

METROBANK

Metrobank assets reached ₱630B in Q3

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S BIGGEST BANK METROpolitan Bank & Trust Co. said its assets reached ₱630.6 billion as of the third quarter of the year.

In a statement, Metrobank said this represented an increase of ₱20.7 billion from the first half's ₱593.9 billion.

As of end-2005, the bank's assets were placed at ₱546.2 billion.

The bank owns the second largest thrift bank in the country, Philippine Savings Bank, as well as investment house First Metro Investment Corp. It has more than 600 domestic and international branches, offices, subsidiaries and affiliates.

The bank's net consolidated loans, discounts and advances as of the third quarter reached ₱375.5 billion, an increase of ₱11.2 billion from the ₱364.2 billion in the second quarter.

Total deposits increased to ₱493.5 billion from the second quarter's ₱443.5 billion.

Total capital accounts amounted to ₱54.2 billion, with capital stock at ₱32.7 billion and surplus at ₱15.4 billion.

In February this year, the bank raised its first tier 1 capital worth ₱12B billion with a 10-year call option. The issue was eight times oversubscribed.

The bank's capital-raising was to prepare for the implementation of Basel II in 2007.

BIR taps ...

From page B1

aside for LGUs. The law likewise states that 20 percent of the annual increase in value-added tax collected by BIR's revenue region goes to the concerned LGUs.

Ric Espiritu, head of the BIR's revenue district office in Pasay City, told reporters that the Texts program was launched last October in the city.

"Barangay captains can be a big help for the BIR. We are thinking of ways [in which] we asked to collect taxes from their constituents for the BIR, although we are not sure yet whether they will agree," Espiritu said.

The idea of a collaboration between the BIR and LGUs is likewise being pushed by the Philippine Association of Local Treasurers and Assessors (Philtla).

Philtla president and Quezon City Treasurer Victor Endriga stressed that a collaboration could substantially help raise the BIR's very robust tax revenue because LGUs have a much larger network of offices than the BIR.

He noted that many businesses registered with the LGUs were not registered with the BIR because many small firms were more afraid of the consequences of not paying taxes to the local government than to the national government, findings added.

Peso seen ...

From page B1

growth in the first half of 2006 to slips down slightly, but remain firm, with the economy expected to expand by 5.1 percent for full-year 2006," Cheong said.

Overall, the economist was bullish on the Philippines' economic fundamentals, citing twin growth engines fueled by robust export receipts and strong inflows from OFWs.

Cheong, who spoke at an economic briefing held by the Financial Executives of the Philippines, also has that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas would likely cut interest rates by a measly one percentage point by year-end as the downtrend in inflation has given the monetary authority more flexibility in managing its policy rates.

She did not believe that the BSP would ease its overnight borrowing rate, currently at 7.5 percent, before the year ends.

"While trending downward, inflation still averaged 6.8 percent year-on-year in January to September and is still well above the central bank's target of 4 to 5 percent," she said.

She added that the current strong growth momentum meant that there was little need to use monetary policy to stimulate growth as there was enough liquidity in the domestic market now.

Doris C. Dumlao

Co-ops urge gov't to define their tax obligations

By Christine A. Saylaan

THE COUNTRY'S UNION OF COOPERATIVES has turned to the Department of Finance and its attached agency, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, for help in clearing up the tax obligations slapped on member organizations nationwide.

Also, the 23,000-accredited cooperatives grouped under the Philippine Cooperative Center (PCC) have submitted to the DOF and BIR a 10-page primer outlining the tax exemption and compliance of cooperatives.

According to PCC chair Sonny Banzon, the cooperatives group deemed it necessary to issue the primer, citing the difficulty some of the members are having in dealing with tax collectors, who appear to have different interpretations of the tax code on cooperatives.

The PCC is hoping that the primer will meet the approval of the DOF and BIR and adopt it "for the uniform guidance of all cooperatives and tax collecting agents," Banzon said in an interview.

Lorie Jeans, Cooperative Development Authority chair, said that, despite the clear stipulations of exemptions from taxes, many cooperatives are still swamped with deficiency tax assessments from the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

"Should these cooperatives be made liable for taxes, even if the exemption is clearly provided in the law?" Jeans asked.

To encourage their formation, cooperatives were granted tax incentives under the Cooperative Code. The incentives depends on whether the cooperatives don business exclusively with members or deals with non-members.

Tax expert Raoul F. Carbonilla from the Punongbayan-Araullo audit firm, said that: "If the cooperatives are to be considered exclusive for promoting self-reliance aimed towards the amelioration of economic development and social justice, [the organizations] should be accorded the benefits clearly intended by law."

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Lies, damned lies, and PAL-CebuPac statistics

THE ILLEGAL AIR CAFE BETWEEN Philippine Airlines and Cebu Pacific...

PAL, which long suffered in silence against the Endangered Species's pretend TV ads about its "fun" livery, last week came blazing out with print ads to dispute Gibralter's latest claim that it has finally dethroned the Lucio Tan airline in the domestic passenger market.

"Let's get real," PAL bravely implied in a series of full-page ads in key newspapers, as it clearly had year-to-end August 2006...

Based on Civil Aeronautics Board records, PAL will lead a commanding load of 48.8 percent over the 30.6-percent market share of "Airline No. 2" within the same period.

"Who is the Real No. 1 Between Airlines?" PAL asked, even running the obvious "Real No. 1" in fiery red color amid a sea of black letters.

(The ad agency behind the series is the Stolo Isaacson (Cad.)

So, who is telling the truth? Until, ironically, both.

Whereas PAL chose to look at a one-year historical snapshot, Cebu Pacific CEO Lance Gokongwei focused on the latest, in Senate figures from Oct. 1-15 to claim that the 20 domestic subsidiary has 8-traffic reached pole position, a good 20 years after its founding.

According to Cebu Pacific, the airline flew a total of 148,378 passengers in the first 15 days of this month as against PAL's 144,337, or the equivalent of 45.227-percent market share as against PAL's 44.02 percent.

Whether this trend would hold the industry would know after tomorrow, when October shall be over.

Still, judging from the Gokongwei confidence in both ads and press statements, final passenger numbers will validate youthful exuberance.

But, then again, PAL's Baptista has an ace up his sleeve, and it is called Air Philippines.

(Correction: The business class version of the spanking new Airbus A319-100 of PAL has eight seats, not four as stated in Friday's column.)

Revenue disintegrity

THE BUREAUCRATIC Revenue Integrity Protection Service is in turmoil, after no less than the BIR's chief was fingered by one of his investigators.

The RIPS chief, Finance Undersecretary Gualberto Mendoza Jr., is now the object of a complaint before the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission after a friend now Toyota dealer reportedly duty-free was found packed in his Marcelle house.

Worse, the 111 model luxury car was later traced in registered with Asia International Auctions Corp., a company which deals directly with the Department of Finance as a wholesale importer of used cars.

In addition to the dealer, a 1993 BMW 5 series car was also found in the Mendoza garage. Despite being also registered in the name of dear International Auctioneers.

In all, the Mendoza household had four vehicles, including a brand-new Toyota Corolla Altis registered in the name of a 20-year-old "unemployed" daughter of the BIR undersecretary, according to the complaint filed by BIR investigator Ruben Vergara.

Pregosa was suspended by Mendoza on Oct. 20, the same day that the investigator filed the corruption complaint against his boss.

A member of the Aquila Legis fraternity, Mendoza was assistant executive secretary for legal affairs during the Estrada administration and a director of the bobby Metropolitan authority.

Money-go-round

■ ABS-CBN is looking for a corporate affairs director, after its president Sen. Pit Cayetano interviewed Bong Suarez, developed cold feet. Deputy has made a career lavishing companies on how to avoid and implement an effective corporate compliance program.

■ PIAFCO lawyers Rodolfo Maglana are this week holding their annual senior partners' meeting all the way in Baguio.

Heard through the grapevine

THE PAGLEDE of Daniel Realuyo's dorm may have to finally shell out more than ₱300,000 in aircraft repairs owed by their defiant friend Realuyo is a Mega percentage since 1997.

This is after the Supreme Court denied the Pagdilao plea to stop the Pasay City Regional Trial Court from enforcing a judgment order issued by a Singapore court in behalf of the Singaporean embryo.

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Cocktales

Victor C. Agustin

₱641B in gov't debt paid in 9 mos.

By Michelle P. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT spent some ₱641 billion in January to September for debt servicing, 2.6 percent higher than year-ago level, as it accelerated debt reduction efforts.

In the first nine months of 2006, debt payment amounted to ₱517.806 billion.

Data from the Bureau of the Treasury showed that of the total debt paid in the nine-month period this year, ₱386.34 billion accounted for principal obligations while interest payment amounted to ₱254.43 billion.

Of the total debt settled, domestic liabilities amounted to ₱495.4 billion and while foreign obligations accounted for about ₱145.6 billion.

For September alone, the amount spent for debt servicing stood at ₱114.34 billion.

The government, hoping to improve its Investment-grade credit ratings, adopts the policy of promptly paying its obligations. Its total debt is very worrisome at about ₱3 trillion.

It has been spending a big chunk of its annual revenue collection for debt servicing, because payments alone eat up about a third of its annual budget.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz earlier said the government was keen on meeting the target of having a zero budget deficit by 2008 through improved revenue collection.

Without deficit, the government will no longer be forced to issue additional debts. Currently, government borrowings are used to plug budget deficits and pay maturing obligations.

To manage its liabilities, Cruz said the government had been borrowing more from domestic sources than from foreign lenders. This helps the country reduce its exposure to foreign exchange risks that could further hurt its debts, he added.

Treasury Secretary Margarito Teves said the government was also reducing the share of commercial loans in total foreign loans to minimize foreign exchange risks.

Loans from multilateral and bilateral institutions—the biggest of which are the Asian Development Bank, and Japan Bank for International Cooperation...come in the form of official development assistance (ODA), which carry lower interest rates. Under the 2006 fiscal program, the government is scheduled to borrow some $4 billion from foreign sources. Of the amount, $900 million is ODA and $3.1 billion is commercial. This represents a borrowing mix of 77.5 : 22.5 in favor of concessional loans.

For 2007, the government intends to revise the borrowing mix to increase the share of ODAs to the total foreign borrowing requirement. Of the $3.1 billion worth of foreign borrowings scheduled for next year, $1.2 billion is commercial and $1 billion is ODA, or a borrowing mix of 38:40 in favor of commercial.

Teves, however, said the borrowing mix was flexible and could still change in such a way that ODA would be higher than commercial loans. This is if the government would not be faced with rising interest.

Domestic borrowings, ODA loans favored

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Higher growth ...

From page B1

tion," the BSP report said.

"However, some economists noted that concerns on political stability and the possibility of some wage adjustments are potential risks to inflation," it said.

The survey's 5.3-percent inflation rate forecast for next year was still higher than the central monetary's targeted range of 4-5 percent.

The inflation forecasts for 2006 ranged between a low of 6.3 percent and a high of 7 percent while the range for next year was much wider at 4-7 percent.

The BSP noted that the 2007 figures analysts also expected continued improvements in economic activity both in 2006 and 2007.

The average forecast for real gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2006 rose slightly to 5.4 percent, higher than last quarter's survey of 5.3 percent. However, this was still below the government's growth target of 5.5-6.1 percent.

"Analysts point out that progress on the country's economic reforms will encourage more foreign direct investments. The resilient services sector is also likely to push growth in 2006," the BSP reported.

"They also noted that subdued OFW (overseas Filipino workers) remittances will further spur private consumption," the report added.

For 2007, the GDP forecast rose to 5.4 percent from the last quarter's forecast of 5.2 percent, likewise lower than the government's target range of 5.7-6.5 percent.

Based on the probability distributions for GDP forecasts, analysts' expectations for output growth converged around the 5.1-6 percent range for 2006 and 2007.

The institutions covered by the survey were ABN Amro, AEE Rizal Securities, Banco de Oro Universal Bank, Bank of America, Citigroup, Development Bank of Singapore, Deutsche Ing-Bgroup, Deutsche Securities, Equitable PCIBank, HSBC, ING Bank, Lehman Brothers, Multinational Investment Bank, Nomura Securities, Philippine Equity Partner, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., UBS Warburg and Standard Chartered.

In its own analysis, the BSP agreed that the easing of world oil prices in recent months had helped reduce the cost-push risks associated with the inflation outlook, as consumers directly benefited from lower domestic fuel pump prices. It said improving agricultural output had also stabilized food prices, thus helping to further bolster monetary authorities' expectations of a return to a low-inflation regime in the medium term.

However, these same supply-side factors continued to serve as wild cards in the prevailing macroeconomic environment, the BSP said.

"The possibility of a reversal of typhoon due to supply concerns and geopolitical developments remains present given continued demand to major economies amid tight supply conditions. Other supply-side developments on the horizon as well, such as the possible El Niño episode," the report said.

The BSP also acknowledged that output growth warranted a risk, noting that while the prospect of rising interest rates in advanced economies may unnerve some investors in the near-term, robust activity in the United States and steady recovery in Europe and Japan may again, in a later point, require tightening by the major central banks.

Globe, Taiwan Mobile offer special SIM for OFWs

Call rate to the Philippines cheaper by 50%

By Rica T. Dizhonda

TWO MEMBERS OF THE iHOLA Mobile alliance, the largest alliance of telecommunications companies in Asia-Pacific, have jointly developed the first and only prepaid SIM for OF-Sprina in Taiwan.

The Globe Tele Inc. and Taiwan Mobile have launched the Taiwan Mobile-Ok Bahalaynan SIM, which allows Filipinos working in Taiwan to call Globe and Touch Mobile (TM) subscribers in the Philippines at more than zero (0) economic charge or than other Taiwan-based cellular providers.

The Ok Bahalaynan SIM offers IDD rate of NT$4.5 per minute for calls to Globe and TM. Other Taiwan cellular providers offer IDD rates ranging from NT$9.50 to NT$12 per minute.

Ok Bahalaynan SIM's NTU for international SMS to Globe and TM is also much cheaper than the NT$5 per SMS of other Taiwan cellular operators. On top of these, Ok Bahalaynan subscribers also get a bonus of 20 domestic SMS for every NT$100 Ok card reloaded into the SIM.

In the Philippines, with the Globe Super Hub Tipid 300 Promo, calls to Taiwan Mobile are offered at the local rate of 19.36 per minute or about $0.13, versus other networks that charge as much as $0.40/per minute.

The Ok Bahalaynan SIM was successfully launched during the Ok Ba Bahalaynan Fiesta held last Oct. 22 at the Chiang Kai Shek Memorial Hall—the biggest Filipino gathering ever witnessed in Taiwan.

"This is part of the two companies' corporate thrust to serve the growing OFW market," Globe chief operating adviser Andrew Tiong said in a statement. "Globe and Taiwan Mobile are committed to enrich and bring families closer together through mobile communication."

Manila-Taipei trade grows 6.9%

By Ramond W. Domingo

TWO-WAY TRADE BETWEEN the Philippines and Taiwan increased 6.9 percent to about US$4.04 billion in the eight months ending in August as efforts to develop a growth corridor linking special economic zones continue.

Taiwan's Government Information Office (GIO) reported that the island economy has received goods imported from the Philippines worth about $1.94 billion as of end-August.

The orders from Taiwan grew 7.2 percent from about $1.81 billion posted in the same period last year.

If the same time, Taiwan shipped to the Philippines goods worth about $2.9 billion — an increase of 6.7 percent compared to figures registered in the same period last year.

January to August trading showed a continuing trade surplus of about $906.2 million for Taiwan, increasing 5.3 percent from $906 million in 2005.

Also, GIO data showed that the Philippines moved down a notch to become Taiwan's 18th largest trading partner in the eight-month period, surpassing for 1.79 percent of its total global trade value for $27.1 billion.

Among the developing countries, the country is Taiwan's fourth largest trade partner after Malaysia, South Arabia, Thailand and Indonesia, which replaced the Philippines at 12th place.

The Philippines remained the 11th largest destination of Taiwanese exports with about 1.1 percent of total outbound cargo valued at $1.56.1 billion.

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—PGMA

• "We would also congratulate the awardees because they were most instrumental in the signing of [government to a private public private partnership]."
—DOE Secretary Peter Favila

• "There are Filipino talents that are world-class. Their leadership awardees have contributed and distinguished themselves in [program] good business practices."
—Ambassador Donald Dee, PCCI president

• "The Philippines is something that all the businessmen have been working forward to, it is a sea of opportunity. It is a sea to [the] center hearts of the businessmen in the country and the economy."
—PHILIPPINE premiere Francis Chua

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Carlos P. Romulo

ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO, I WROTE A COUPLE of articles on the Philippines and Thailand as unlikely twin economies that had drifted wide apart through the decades 2001, Aug. 3 & 9, 2004).

I had cited some statistical data from the 1960s and 70s on the two countries, that showed how criminally identical the two economies were about four decades ago.

That generated a lot of feedback from readers who contributed even more observations on how the two economies followed such divergent paths through the years.

Having been to Bangkok again last week, and heading to their sparkling new Suvarnabhumi (pronounced "Su-wanna-boo") Airport, I couldn't help getting the same mixed feelings of envy and frustration all over again. And as I met and discussed with Thai government officials, including from the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB)—their equivalent to our Neda—that sinking feeling that we are so hopelessly behind this encouraged some of ours got reinforced all the more.

Flashback

Once upon a time, we were the envy of our neighbors for the same reason we now envy the Thais.

Flashback to the early 1960s, when Manila International Airport (MIA) was the highlight of the annual school excursion to Manila, featuring an exciting ride (or two, or more, depending on one's youth) enthusiasm and energy levels) up the country's...and possibly the region's—very first escalator.

Asia's first airline, our very own PAL, flew with world industry leaders such as Pan American and Trans World Airlines (TWA), one of what was considered one of the busiest international airports in the region then.

The Philippine economy was regarded as second only to Japan in the entire Asian region.

We were, according to a famous friend, seen by his countrymen as an advanced country and object of their admiration and envy then.

Thais and Indonesians came in large numbers to study in our colleges and universities, especially in Los Baños where they picked up their knowledge in the agricultural sciences.

Show window

How times have changed.

Bangkok's new international airport, reputed to be the largest in Asia and having the tallest control tower in the world, is now positively this dazzling economy's best showwindow and reflection of how much the Thais have accomplished through the years.

Huge as the terminal building is, one is immediately struck at how it still gets filled with a seemingly unending stream of passengers. Built for an initial annual capacity of 45 million passengers, it is clear that it wouldn't take too long for them to need to construct the planned second phase that would raise this to 100 million.

I was told that the airport had been decades in the making. Planning and land preparation had actually spanned that long, although construction of the airport itself happened only in the last few years.

While the project was not without the usual controversies ranging from environmental concerns to financing issues, it was the political will of ousted Thai leader Thaksin that finally pulled it through, I also heard my Thai hosts say.

But they were quick to add that certain favored businesses benefited immensely from the project, as if to convey that there was nothing heroic about Thaksin's feat either.

Looking beyond the airport, a most remarkable contrast between us and the Thais can be seen in their demographic data. The Serb had about 36 million people in 1970. But by 2005, we Filipinos numbered 80 million, while the Thais had only grown to 61 million, a difference equivalent to the entire population of Mindanao.

In 1970, children and senior citizens were 41 and 3 percent of the Thai population, respectively, while the working age population made up the other half.

That implied a dependency ratio (i.e. ratio of children and senior citizens to working-age population) of 100 percent, or each worker needing to support an average of one dependent.

By 2005, the population profile had changed to only 23 percent children and 10 percent senior citizens, or a dependency ratio below 50 percent. In other words, its working age population now outnumbers its dependent population at a ratio of two to one.

Demographic dividend

Thailand is now reaping the demographic dividend arising from its success in reducing its population growth rate beginning in the 1980s.

The NESDB factsheet states: "Fewer children population provides chances of child development in terms of physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and social development with more quality."

In short, there are more brains and better quality Thais who enjoy a better quality of life than ex-Filipinos—all because we have been reproducing much faster than they do.

In fact, we are now reproducing ourselves more than twice as fast as our cousins the Thais, with a population growth rate of 2.3 percent per year against their 0.7 percent.

In 1970, Thailand and the Philippines both had per capita incomes averaging around $250; now the Thais have $2,000 while we only have $1,000—an $1,000 difference.

If you're looking for reasons why we had diverged so much after 35 years, look no further. Comments welcome at rbdalisay@mwsai.edu.

Smart, Shell urged to list shares

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

MOBILE PHONE GIANT SMART COMMUNICATIONS Inc. and oil refiner Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. are two of 65 firms identified for listing on the stock market by the Board of Investments.

Pascual de Guzman, director of BOI's legal department, said during a Philippine Stock Exchange briefing last week that the identified firms belonged to the chemical, agricultural and energy industries.

He declined, however, to disclose the other names on the list.

But Guzman said that Smart had claimed it no longer needed to list its shares because its mother firm, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), was already listed.

PSE president Francis Lim said, however, that he would encourage Smart to list despite conflicts between the provisions of Executive Order 226 on the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987 and the PSE's own shareholding rule.

Under EO 226, BOI-registered firms are required to offer for sale to the public 10 percent or more of their total subscribed capital stock.

Under the PSE's shareholding rule, on the other hand, a subsidiary or parent company of a publicly-listed firm would not be considered fit for listing if the assets and operations of the applicant company were substantially the same as those of the listed firm.

"I would like Smart to be listed. I will encourage them to list. Should our chain listing rule, which is a private rule, override a provision of the law, my personal opinion is the rules of a self-regulatory organization should give way to the mandatory listing," Lim said.

On the other hand, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. said last year that it was not yet the time to go public due to an ongoing review of its oil refinery operations.

Shell had expressed concern over the local investment environment, a key factor it was considering in determining whether to expand its operations here or shut down its refinery.

Shell and listed oil giant Petron Corp. are the only oil refiners left after Caltex decided to close its refinery and just import finished petroleum products.

PNOC-EC to drill well in Leyte

By Abigail L. Ho

THE SOON-TO-BE-LISTED PHILIPPINE National Oil Co. Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) will be drilling a new well in Caibiran, Northern Leyte by December in case Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes decides that there was enough steam to produce between 125 megawatts (MW) and 200 MW of power.

PNOC-EDC president and chief executive Oscar Aquino said drilling and related costs would add to around $2 million.

He said there were already two wells in the area, but these were not enough to determine the feasibility of putting up a plant in the area.

"We'll address one of the holes and dig one new hole. These three holes will enable us to determine whether or not the available steam there will make this a viable project," he told the business.

He said PNOC-EDC should be able to determine the viability of the project by February or March next year.

The available steam should be able to produce 125 MW to 200 MW of power to justify the costs involved in developing the steam field, putting up a plant, and establishing 87 kilometers of transmission lines to connect the plant to the grid, he said.

Should the costs be found feasible for development, he said funds to develop the steam field would either come from PNOC-EDC cashflow or from loans.

The power plant would be undertaken by a private entity to which PNOC-EDC would sell the steam from the Caibiran field, while the transmission line would be operated by National Transmission Corp., he said.

In an earlier interview, Eduardo Mañalac, president and chief executive of PNOC-EDC parent PNOC, said the state firm had already talked with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation for possible official development assistance (ODA).

If the Caibiran site would prove capable of producing 125 MW to 200 MW of steam, Aquino said this would justify the needed investments to convert this steam into power and to transport this power to other parts of the power-hungry Visayas and Mindanao grids.

Binay at the ramparts

MAYOR BINAY AND I GO BACK A LONG way—to the early 1960s when we were both working at Manila Life in Plaza Moraga, Dasmariñas. For four years, Binay rushed as a clerk in the policy issue section while studying law at night. During lunch break, he would let his books to the privacy of the storeroom.

After Binay passed the bar, he quit Insular Life to practice law. I lost sight of him until the mid-1980s when he became active in politics in the old 6th. I was holding office at Ayala Avenue and I would see him leading the rallies.

Binay fought, not only Marcos, but also Makati Mayor Nemenzo Sr. And when Marcos fled to Hawaii, Binay was in the midst of the revolution-ary forces that stormed and captured Malacañang.

For his valuable contribution to the cause of freedom, Cory Aquino appointed Binay officer in charge of Makati. Eventually, he was elected mayor and has ruled ever since.

Nino Nilluna ran to mayor. Binay has him in every single election. After that disaster, nobody ran against Binay. He is trying to get back into the limelight by accusing those of being ghost employees (former members Binay has now threatened) but as Binay says, is anybody listening?

Binay's outstanding political achievement is that he is the only OIC appointed by Cory Aquino in Metro Manila who remains in his post. How does he do it?

Makati is actually two cities. First is the Makati business district with the upscale subdivisions around it that Ayala Corp. built after World War II. This ultra-modern city comprises 10 percent of the area and income of Makati, but accounts for only 20 percent of the votes. Second is the old, overcrowded Spanish center, which comprises only 30 percent of the area and income, but holds 80 percent of the votes.

Binay's political strategy is simple. He tells the Makati Business Club, "You take care of business, and I will take care of City Hall" (by improving services, although municipal). He tolerates the taxes from the business district and spends them on the old town where he has built parks, schools, a university and a Ospital ng Makati. The poor get free medical care. The senior citizens get free movie tickets.

Insurance companies have all but 99 malls to set up shop on business-friendly Makati. The old government tax rate on insurance premiums is the lowest in Metro Manila, as is insurance broking. I see to it that policies are issued in Makati to save on taxes for my clients.

I have lived in Makati since I built my house in Bel-Air in 1960. I sure my living and buy all my food and everything else I need in Makati. And since Binay became mayor, I have learned to love Makati.

Doing business with City Hall has become almost enjoyable. Information technology is widely used. Last year, it took only 15 minutes for me to get a certified computer generated death certificate of my mother-in-law who had passed away 20 years before.

Of course, Binay is no saint. Everybody including the vendors in the public market I go to, knows this. But suspending Binay, Mon

QUESTIONS OF POLICES

Honesto C. General

Mayor Mercado and the entire City Council is clearly disinclusionary and oppressive.

When Malacañang fell there is no question, not Binay and the city officials, but the entire citizenry of Makati.

But from the ramparts of his office in the 23rd floor of the tallest city hall in the land, Binay will eventually come out smelling like roses to his constituents. In the end, he will be stronger than ever before. Malacañang will then realize that it has done Binay a great, great favor.

Gov't moves to curb ITH abuse

By Rosemal W. Domingo

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS IS wrapping up a memorandum of agreement with the Bureau of Internal Revenue on a framework for the administration and monitoring of fiscal incentives, particularly income tax holidays.

The pact would amend current procedural guidelines on the application of ITH which, BOI officials said, was not being monitored sufficiently such that unscrupulous entities were able to abuse the incentive.

Even companies in industries not registered with the BOI are able to claim tax exemption, the officials said.

Under the MOU, each income tax return that has with it an audited claim for ITH should be supported with a certificate of ITH entitlement to be issued by the BOI.

Also, any ITH application or claim filed beyond the 30-day limit from the date of ITH filing with the BIR would no longer be accepted.

Further, the BOI will consider claims without BOI endorsement as void.

The agreement also provides that the BOI has a year to process, review and act on all ITH applications filed for a given year.

If any application was not processed and evaluated within the prescribed period because of policy or legal issues, the BOI would require the applicant to secure from the BIR a waiver of statute of limitations.

The BOI said the BIR had been at odds over the beneficial effect of tax perks on the national coffers.

Trade officials had maintained that tax perks were essential for investments to flow while finance officials said the incentives resulted to billions of pesos in foregone revenues for the government.

Data from the Department of Finance show that in 2005, the government lost some P300 billion in foregone revenues due to various tax exemption provided through fiscal perks.

BOI data, on the other hand, show that between 1995 and 2005, the government was able to attract an average of P1.8 in investments and P2.1 in export earnings for every peso of incentives.

BOI, BIR to sign agreement soon

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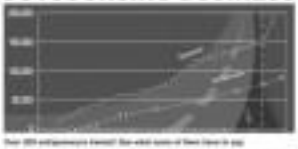

Techniques on Gaining Overwhelming Organizational Competitiveness

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MICHAEL G. MALAGHAN

A legend in the field of sales

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3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

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Session 2: Nov. 17, 3 p.m. - 7 p.m.
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STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Head Office and Financial Subsidiaries)
As of September 28, 2006

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Items	517,700,899.27
Due from Bangko Sentral	1,610,613,324.01
Due from Other Banks	1,150,788,588.61
Interbank Loans Receivable	452,471,366.20
Trading Account Securities (Net)	104,197,289.03
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)	10,113,040,328.86
Loans, Discounts & Advances (Net)	31,338,611,749.49
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)	2,099,477,994.31
Other Assets (Net)	
Property Owned/Acquired	1,873,868,418.70
Others	2,497,523,489.14
TOTAL ASSETS	51,748,848,129.89

LIABILITIES

Demand Deposits	8,919,509,281.63
Savings Deposits	8,809,842,087.81
Time Deposits	33,757,669,817.19
Due to Bangko Sentral	13,122,992.46
Due to Banks	
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders	423,068,484.25
Bills Payable	
BSP-Rediscounts/Special Programs	
Others	1,865,227,508.79
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits	82,311,884.59
Other Liabilities	1,299,018,351.11
TOTAL LIABILITIES	53,161,849,918.23

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

Capital Stock	2,516,383,160.00
Surplus	3,114,885,809.27
Surplus Reserves	955,797,209.43
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	5,586,796,214.63
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	57,748,646,129.89

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS

Bills for Collection	220,504.91
Assets Held Under Trust and Investment Management Agreements	909,973,508.28
Invested in:	
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stock	91,952,771.53
Other Assets	213,717,736.28
Accountabilities:	
Trust & Other Fiduciary Unearned Income & Other Accountabilities	909,277,462.73
	220,558.38
Other Contingent Accounts	179,578,104.11
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	455,470,118.23

Additional Information

1. Interest on:	
a) Government Bonds	12,945,267.58
b) Loans	371,935,847.15
2. a. Total Non-Performing Loans	1,045,054,416.08
b. Capitalized Loans and Other Real Assets	1,063,693,683.19
c. Deferred Loan Loss Reserve	271,000,000.00
d. Specific Loan Loss Reserve	1,068,370,770.10
e. Total General Loan Loss Reserve	1,068,867,384.58
f. Total Non-NCGRR Loans Accounts	
g. Ratio of Non-Performing Loans to Total Loan Portfolio	7.90%
h. Ratio of Total NCGRR Loanshortfalls to Total Loan Portfolio	6.70%
i. Ratio of Past Due NCGRR to Total Loan Portfolio	15.90%
j. Return on Equity	13.90%
3. Compliance with Ratios:	
a. Prescribed Ratio of Total Risk Assets (Actual Ratio)	14.90%
b. Prescribed Ratio of Core to Total Risk Assets (Actual Ratio)	4.98%

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Dominic P. Daza
Vice Chairman

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Ma. Theresa G. Bandin

Margaret T. Chan

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Alice Arlos Espinosa

Ayala Life brings a 'Testamento' from across the miles

FOR TRAVELED THOUSANDS OF miles, rendered years of service to a foreign company, and fought the tall, time limitations of being away from your loved ones, back home. All the hard work and challenges that you faced is a testimony to the bravery and depth of your love for your family – and this legacy must not be forgotten.

This is what Ayala Life's "Testamento" is about... serving a lasting legacy for your loved ones, putting into words your desire for a better life and a brighter future you and your loved ones.

Ayala Life gives you a guide in writing your own legacy with "Testamento." "Testamento" is not only filled with useful information about products to help secure your future and a guide on writing your will, it is also filled with sincerity and slice of heart.

Within the "Testamento," Ayala Life Assurance Inc., a subsidiary of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), introduces Protect 300, Dollar and Peso Protect 300 in a single-pay savings and protection program. It provides money to benefits at the end of 5 or 10 years, and insurance protection due is equal to 3-times the maximum benefit of the plan. It is the only savings and protection product in the market that provides 300 percent insurance protection – guaranteed.

In a briefing about the product, Cesar Tejada, president of BPI Insurance Inc. 2002, the distribution arm of Ayala Life Assurance Inc., highlighted that "Protect 300 is a no-frills savings and protection plan that guarantees your beneficiaries tuturuan benefits three times!"

He further cited that another attractive feature of Protect 300 is the assurance of growth in the investment. Protect 300 is the ideal long-term, risk-free, moderate-yield insurance cum investment product with guaranteed benefits. Basically, the premium is paid **one time only** with an **interest** rate of between (8%) "as high as 7.40 percent on the Peso Protect 300 plan, and as high as 5.20 percent 300 on the Dollar Protect 300 plan." The minimum amount of coverage is P100,000 for the Peso Protect 300, and $3,000 for Dollar Protect 300." In terms of age limit, plans may cover the insurance as infant, or 30 days old. Younger plan-holders may buy lower single premiums.

Emil De Quiroz, president of Ayala Life Assurance Inc., asserted that "fundamentally, Protect 300 is best for just about anyone who wants to save money or plan protect their loved ones from any financial burden." He added, "Protect 300 wishes to lend a comfortable life... We also understand the people's desire to secure their future as well as their loved ones' future. Protect 300 will help them – will help you – achieve those things. With Protect 300, we can and will help you achieve security and protection for yourself and your loved ones."

For more information on "Testamento" and Peso and Dollar Protect 300, you can contact your BPI Branch Manager, or you can call the Protect 300 hotline at 753-2000 (753-1000).

THP BAGS 2006 PERSONNEL PROGRAM OF THE YEAR

Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. (TMP) won the Personnel Program of the Year for its "Team Relations" campaign during the 2006 Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) Annual Awards held recently at the Crimson Plaza Hotel. TMP executives for Team Relations function that carries the unique task to bridge management and team members and serves as the Human Resources Department's members in the different areas/divisions. In photo are (from left) Personnel Program of the Year judges Benito Mendoza and Ellen Fernandez Lagunsay, TMP executive vice president Dr. David Go, TMP president Hiroaki Ito, TMP vice president for Human Resources Ms. Cristina Arevalo, TMP Team Relations manager Carlos Jose Sanchez, PMAP vice president Imelda Bermejo, and Team Relations staff Maria Lourdes Culeb, Stella Tirador, Rhoel Cano, Raul Tenoglinawa, Philip Bonifacio, Hannibal Bautista, and Gerry Espinosa.

TOSHIBA-MITSUBISHI MOTORS JOINT PROMOTION LAUNCH

Photo shows the Toshiba-Mitsubishi Motors Joint Promotion Launch held Sept. 30 at Eden Nature in Antipolo City. (from left) Toshiba Singapore Computer Systems Corporation vice president, marketing, Mitsubishi Motors Phils. Corp. Assistant Manager Ms. Rowena Ong, Toshiba Singapore Computer Systems division director, Toshiba Singapore PTE. Ltd. Organic R. Salleza Jr. (president and CEO), Toshiba (Symantec Inc.) Yoshiaki Nishimura (vice president), Mitsubishi Motors Phils Corp. Lee Kim Seng (manager) distributor business group, computer services division, Toshiba Singapore PTE Ltd. Vicente C. Salazar Jr. (executive vice president and COO), Toshiba (Symantec Inc.) Walter G. Quimpo (assistant vice president, marketing services, Mitsubishi Motors Phils Corp.), Mitsubishi Motors Phils Corp. senior vice president, marketing, Mitsubishi Motors Phils Corp. Jacob Schlatter (general manager, computer services division, Toshiba Singapore PTE Ltd), Roger S. Salvador (senior manager, technical) (Symantec Inc.), Toshiba (Symantec Inc.)

CameraHaus: A house of better cameras

CAMERAHAUS, A CONVENIENT ONE-stop camera shop, showcases comprehensive collections only of the latest cameras and accessories from world-class brands like Canon, Nikon, Sony, Kodak, and Fujifilm, among others. Brands which people around the world have placed a great deal of trust throughout the years.

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CameraHaus has a growing network of highly-accessible outlets in key cities such as Ilimin Manila, Cebu, Iloilo, Davao and Cagayan de Oro.

Today, CameraHaus has a wide array of cameras and accessories each customized for every unique photographic need of the client.

• Filter Cameras - If you are looking for simplicity, go for Canon IXY 800. Or, go for the more pro-oriented Canon A85. If you are an adventurous type,

• Digital Rebel – Daring to go for the digital experience? Try the Nikon D40. Or Nikon D50, affordably priced at P25,995 only!

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plorations! Lifestyle. Or, check out the Canon IXUS series for its superb design and compact innovation.

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Check them out for the new models and be thrilled with the latest features built in the cameras such as image stabilizer and anti-shot for CCD protection.

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For inquiries, visit any of Camera Haus' outlets or call the head office at 524-8806 or CameraHaus Clarkview at 045-9662-141.

Hair talk for men

IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE FOR most men to consider the onset of baldness like a death sentence. Men react to this unavoidable fact of their lives by wearing a hairpiece, applying very expensive hair potions or just accepting the inevitable. But in recent years a more suitable option for females as well as able. It is called Hair Transplantation. Dr. Andrew G. Pineda is noted as the pioneer of this surgical procedure in the country.

For the uninformed, Dr. Pineda explained that Hair Transplantation is a safe, outpatient procedure with minimal pain. He says, "First of all, and, most importantly, the result of this technique is natural, permanent and nearly imperceptible. All this value added could have been yours. Personally, there are no going test of maintenance procedures unlike those required with

hair-replacement or weaves. Modern techniques allow a patient to have a full head of hair to men to thinning areas."

Since establishing his practice in 1997, Dr. Pineda has done procedures on politicians, celebrities, priests, judges, drivers, security guards, waiters and even non-working students. The first Transplantation procedure and its results had proven to be a dramatic experience, an epiphany of sorts, to many of the Hair Transplantation patients.

In our society, so much importance is attributed to having a full head of hair for our psychological and emotional well-being. Thanks to a highly sophisticated yet relatively simple procedure called Hair Transplantation, men are now assured that they can regain their "crowning glory"

CENTER FOR POP, 'PILIPINAS' MOATON NA' TIE-UP

Center for Pop Music Philippines Inc. is preparing its new "Pop Star Style in Pix" TV show entry for the Feb. 11 to 18, 2007 PTA Show season. From (left) Mr. Albert Alison Ang, founder and CEO of Center for Pop Music Philippines Limited Ltd. DTRP CEO Ronnie Mercado Lingkis looks on after the signing of the memorandum of agreement. Filipinas Kapuso Network Inc. executive vice president for Entertainment Group Ms. Wilma Galvante (2nd from left) and Ms. Rosalinda Orosa (right) look

New amlodipine camsylate gets BFAD approval

IT'S NOW OFFICIAL: a new brand of amlodipine camsylate will soon be available in the market courtesy of Theraphamina Inc., a division of United Laboratories (Unilab).

The Bureau of Food and Drugs has recently granted a certificate of product registration for the new brand of amlodipine. The BFAD has conducted a stringent evaluation of all documents and samples of the new brand of amlodipine to assure its efficacy and safety and the issuance of its certificate of product registration indicates that the new product has garnered all tests for efficacy and safety.

The new brand of amlodipine will be sold at almost 50 percent lower than the originators brand. This is good news to the almost 7 million Filipinos who are suffering from hypertension, most of whom cannot comply with their treatment because of the high price of medicines.

Amlodipine is one of the most scientifically well-documented drugs which have been shown to be effective and safe in the treatment of hypertension. A major barrier, however, for a more satisfactory patient compliance is the cost of the medicine. There has long been a clamor among doctors and patients alike on another brand of amlodipine which is bioequivalent as the innovator brand but is more affordable.

Antodipine efficacy

According to a 2004 study published in the Journal of Clinical Therapeutics, amlodipine camsylate has been shown to be equivalent (comparable) with the formulation of the originator brand of amlodipine. This was based on pharmacokinetic (bioavailability absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion of drugs) and pharmacodynamic outcome of the drug) studies.

The study was conducted in healthy male Korean subjects aged 20 to 40 years. All subjects received a single oral dose of either conventional or the newly developed amlodipine camsylate formulation. Blood samples for pharmacokinetic analysis of amlodipine were obtained during the 144-hour period after dosing. Systolic and diastolic blood pressure and pulse rate were measured prior to each blood sampling. Furthermore, safety profiles were assessed such as hematology and biochemistry, electrocardiography, urinalysis, and adverse events.

Amlodipine camsylate is a crystalline salt of amlodipine suitable for pharmaceutical formulation. It meets all the required pharmaceutical properties as an effective antihypertensive and anti-anginal agent. Its a calcium antagonist, it blocks the transport of calcium ions into the muscular tissues in the walls of the coronary arteries. This effect relaxes the artery muscles and dilates the coronary arteries and the peripheral arteries. Such action relieves chest pain and lowers the blood pressure.

In a country where hypertension is prevalent and a big portion of the population is under the poverty line, the introduction of a safe, effective and affordable medicine is a welcome change. More and more Filipino patients are looking for local pharmaceutical companies, such as Unilab, to provide them with effective medicines at a price which they can afford.

KODAK, LAKING NATIONAL TIE UP

Kodak Philippines Ltd together with National Bookstore's Laking National Confectionery (LNC) through the cooperation with Member Systems Inc. signed a tie-up agreement Aug. 10 at the MIS office in Mandaluyong City. This effort is aimed at providing LNC with Kodak Easyshare Cameras at discounted rates. Shown are (from left) April Israel, MIS marketing executive-customer relationship marketing; Judith Flores, MIS manager-customer relationship marketing; Pramod Parmeshwar, Kodak Philippines Ltd. area manager; Alejandro Ramirez, SVP marketing (Pandan Operations Inc. (POI); Michelle Bautista, MIS product specialist for Kodak and Fatima Gerona, Kodak Philippines Ltd account manager. The process is open to all Laking National Confectionery to avail themselves of the Kodak C310 units at P5,500 instead of the regular price of P5,990. Other Kodak consumer models like the C530, C530, C663, C643, C653, M893, M1033 and M1063 ultra-slim digital camera with built-in Bluetooth® can also be availed of at special discount. Laking National Confectionery availed of these low prices simply by presenting their Laking ID cards to the forthcoming computer store outlets nationwide. Accent Micro, PC Express, Pinpoint Computers, and Nimel Megabyte.

Sony Ericsson, MasterCard team up for new promo

THE SONY ERICSSON P990i, THE most anticipated mobile business communication device in the market, is now available in an exclusive offer from Master Card. Cardholders who charge their purchase of the Sony Ericsson P990i to participating outlets or their Hotmail, Titanium or Gold MasterCard get a free Bluetooth Headset HBH-PV700.

The Sony Ericsson P990i partnered with the HBH-PV700 headset enables any mobile warrior to handle business and leisure easily. The headset is a lightweight and ergonomic device that keeps you ready to reach on the go. The phone also offers a new spin of business and applications that meets the needs of every mobile business lifestyle.

The P990i's 2-megapixel camera with autofocus doubly functions as a business card scanner. You'll never have to input contact information manually or lose a contact if you lose their business card. The phone's large 2.4-inch screen is able to scan the complete information and store it directly to your contact file.

The P990i also offers a push e-mail facility for fast and secure access to your corporate and personal e-mail, with support for various push e-mail service providers. Now armed with 3G connectivity, the WIFI-enabled P990i gives users ultra-fast Web access anytime, anywhere. Viewing full HTML pages in landscape has also been made possible with the new Opera 8 browser.

The P990i also enables video conferencing, streaming video and playback of 3G frames, and has a touch-based picture editor. FM radio, clock radio, stopwatch and timer. A fully specified music player also supports MP3, AAC and AAC+ formats. The P990i also has flight mode for access in different applications while the phone is still during flights.

Participating outlets include Sony Ericsson Concept Shops in Greenhills Center in Greenhills 2, Alabang in Cherries 1, Eastwood Libis, Robinsons Galleria, Shangri-la Plaza Mall, Ambassador in Shangri-la Plaza Mall and Rob Square 2; Automatic Green in Glorietta 4, Gateway Mall, Festival Supermall and SM North Edsa; Grassroots in Rob Square 1, Market! Market! and SM San Lazaro; Seamless in Cyber Use Mall, SM Southmall, The Podium, Power Plant Mall, SM Centerpoint, SM Megamall and SM North Edsa; and Wireless Marketing in Pasay Road, Makati and SM Megamall.

The Sony Ericsson P990i Master Card promo is valid until Nov. 19.

Breast cancer walk attracts 12,000 participants

THERE MAY BE 10,000 FILIPINAS LIVING diagnosed with breast cancer every year, but even thousands more are committed to helping women win the fight against breast cancer.

Last June 22, more than 12,000 people in Manila, Manokwari and Cagayan de Oro joined hers in evening awareness and raising funds through the "Walk Against Breast Cancer".

The participants included celebrities, breast cancer survivors and their families, Avon dealers, Breastfriends and associates, students, athletes, and even pets.

In Manila, the largest contingent that gathered at the Old Mall of Asia consisted of 5,000 students from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

Breast cancer support groups Acoja, Excellence Breast Health, Breast Cancer Institute of Manila, Breast Friends East Avenue, Hug Inc. Joy in Living, and Think Pink were present.

The walk was made more colorful by a big delegation of Avon Tinanza employees led by president Alan Knox in their bright pink T-shirts. Other partners like the Philippine Cancer Society, UMA-7, OPV 11, 100 Mabuhay Arts, Equitable-PCI Bank, PLDT, Smart and BCBC were present to lobby for.

The Girl Scouts of the Philippines, Mr. Forever Team and Manila Dragons Dragonboat Rowing Team also participated.

Talk are around about the number of people – about 7,000 of them who woke up really early and are here today for a good cause. It's such a wonderful feeling," says new Avon general manager Bob Bolduc.

"I have attended several of these walks in different countries around the world and I am impressed by the Filipinos' commitment to fighting breast cancer," he adds.

The Manila leg was hosted by GMA-7 talents Ian Calisido and Arnold Clavio. Veteran actor Leo Martinez, breast cancer survivor Mariwasi Fernandez and newscaster Lorrie Pe-Pua graced the event. A separate event was also held by Regine Tolentino and Avon executives Moys Aquino and Linda Cordeiro.

Globally, Avon has been advocating early detection of breast cancer since 1993. Since then and until more than 20 countries taking part in fundraising events such as the Walk, Avon has raised more than $500 million in funds. In the Philippines, funds raised have helped establish and maintain the Philippine General Hospital Breast Care Center and provide hospitals in key cities with breast care equipment.

The event was made possible through the support of partner hosts Avon's Oncology GMA-7 and QTV-11, Philippine Cancer Society, the SM Mall of Asia, the Polytechnic University of the Philippines and sponsors Equitable PCIBank, PLDT, Smart, BCBC, Jo Shapo/Sophia, Blue Philippines, the Philippine College of Surgeons and the Philippine Red Sumatran Society.

BEAR BRAND 'TRANSIT BLITZ' WINNERS AWARDED

Bear Brand Sterilized Milk, a name to stand for generations for reasons from education, to enjoying incredible winners of its recently concluded 'Bear Brand Sterilized Transit Blitz'. Four jeepney drivers from Pasig City received P50,000 worth of cash prizes and jeepney makeovers. Three other drivers won P5,000 each, while each of the seven runners-up winners took home their 'Bear Brand Sterilized' gift packs and cash prizes from P200,000 worth of cash prizes and jeepney packages were also given away to lucky jeepney drivers all over Metro Manila and Pampanga. The Bear Brand Sterilized Transit Blitz campaign, the latest work endorsed by the working class of Metro Manila like jeepney drivers, and aims to assist them in their everyday jobs by giving them the energy they need to start the day. Shown is Ceres Doctor of Bear Brand Philippines marketing operations Jones and sweety beverages and adult nutrition with the grand prize winners.

Pressured by population growth, gov't's seek new road technologies

PRESSURED BY POPULATION growth and increasing global urbanize traffic, governments of developed and developing countries are on the forefront to new road technologies that can ease the load of the world's crowded streets.

These countries, according to the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), include those in Asia and metropolises, where road infrastructure has failed to keep a huge chunk of governments expenditures and where exhaustive traffic results in excessive wastage of precious fuel and productivity loss.

"Thus, new technologies that can bring about more and better roads and bridges at lesser costs and built would be a welcome relief," said DPWH Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane.

"Such state-of-the-art technologies and practices will be taken up during the 12th International conference of the Road Board Association of Asia and Australasia (RBAAA)," Ebdane added.

Scheduled from Nov. 19 to 24 at the Philippine International Convention Center, the RBAAA conference will gather the world's biggest assembly of road engineering experts to provide solutions to this global problem.

"The solutions will be fully discussed during the technical sessions where some 200 technical papers from the association's 28-member countries (the parts of the world will be presented," said RBAAA president Salvador A. Reyno, the first-ever Filipino to occupy the position in its 33-year history.

"The innovations range extensively from road planning and design to pavements performance, safety engineering, heavy vehicle dynamics, road user behavior, transport economics, environment, and local area traffic management, among others," Reyno explained.

The most visible and regionally applicable among these are expected to be included in the discussion among the officials of RBAAA member-governments during their 36th Heads of Road Authorities (Technical) meeting, a parallel event to the conference.

"Some of the new technologies may have materials science, a relatively new branch of scientific study, come into play because of the need for lighter but stronger and less expensive indestructive components," said Ebdane, the host to his fellow counterparts in the conference.

He said the DPWH, RBAAA, and the event's co-organizers the RBAAA-Philippine Chapter and the Road Engineering Association of the Philippines (Reap) "are hereby preparing" the country's historic hosting of this international conference.

The four-day event includes a grand exhibit of road engineering products, services, projects and technologies of local and foreign governments, contractors, equipment, and allied businesses.

Inquiries or reservations for the conference and exhibit can be made with event manager Fern de Manila (tel. 896-0820, fax 896-0827, e-mail fern@info.com.ph, and websites www.roadconference.com.ph and www.rbaaa.com.ph).

An important aspect of the event is the 41st RBAAA Governing Council Meeting, which will be presided over by Reyno.

The 32-man council was created when the RBAAA was organized in 1973, initially by 30 countries, to formalize regional cooperation and pave the way for technology transfer among its members.

The move was prompted by the inadaptability of many road technologies then existing outside the Asian and Australasian region because of environmental factors.

Globe Telecom joins POEA vs illegal recruiters

GLOBE TELECOM, THROUGH GLOBE Kabalayan, its site for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), has joined forces with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) to raise public awareness and sustain the crackdown on illegal recruiters.

Since 2004, POEA and Globe Kabalayan have developed projects to meet the common goal of ensuring that aspiring OFWs will be properly deployed overseas.

This year, Globe Kabalayan provides a three-pronged support system for the POEA anti-illegal recruitment campaign to ensure that OFWs will not fall into the hands of illegal recruitment operations.

Globe, Globe mapped electronic billboard and signage at the POEA head office to display, showing applicants the legal way of applying overseas.

The company also constructed the POEA Globe Kabalayan OFW Internet Hub, the first ever free Internet service and one-stop shop for Globe Telecom services.

Likewise, Globe produced brochures, flyers, and posters for distribution in the POEA regional and satellite offices as well as initiated a multimedia advertising campaign composed of print, radio, and TV ads designed to further strengthen awareness of the general public about POEA's anti-illegal recruitment campaign.

Globe also maximized the use of cellphones or mobile E-mail for OFWs to access information on accredited agencies and, thereby, help them avoid illegal recruiters.

For instance, applicants who use Globe Handy phone and Touch Mobile (TM) subscribers can simply text POEA to 2288 for a short listed dropdown of value-added services (VAS) features related to overseas job hunting. Information that can be accessed includes accreditation of recruitment agencies, job openings, and list of available employment per country.

While POEA ensures decent and productive employment for OFWs, Globe shares its commitment for the OFWs and their families by keeping them connected and empowering them to maximize their time, effort and money through Globe's cost-effective and reference cellular service through Globe Kabalayan.

Right now, Globe Kabalayan offers convenient and reliable E-mail and Text Messaging services like International Share-A-Load, and Call Costs that allow Filipinos abroad to send prepaid load credits to their friends and family in the Philippines who are Globe or TM subscribers.

Meanwhile, G-Cash and Quick Send and Load Cards allow OFWs to send remittances to their loved ones as quickly and as simple as sending a text message.

At the same time, Globe Kabalayan has partnered with international telecommunication providers to give Filipinos the cheapest SMS and international text rates to Globe and TM subscribers in the Philippines.

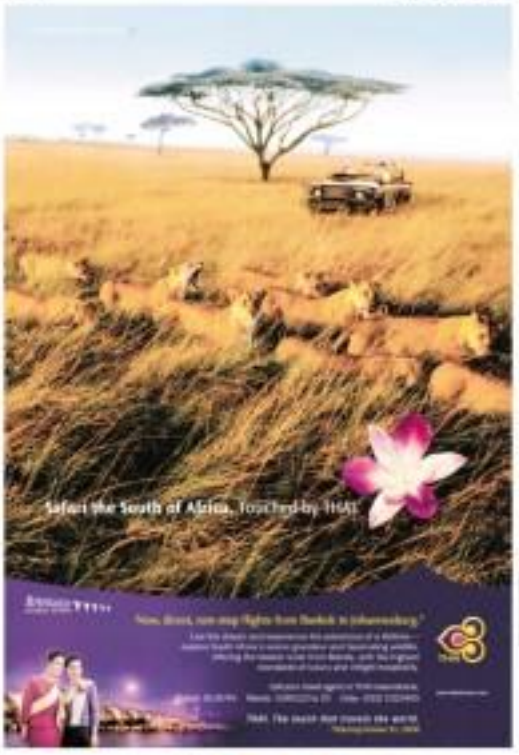
For more information on Globe Kabalayan services can be viewed at www.globekabalayan.com.ph.

SM in caring partnership

BRIGHT SPOTTER LIKE "THE GALACTIC MAY DANCE" electric messages the air with the virtue. One can find their most prominently at SM Supermalls all over the nation. SM's Christmas decorations are a testament to the company's commitment to improve the poor economic situation. The Salvation Army, a charitable organization and nonchurches institution, serves the Filipino community through its skills training programs, children and youth services and health and social services among others. Both work for the needy. Every year, The Salvation Army finds its satisfaction to continue its mission of alleviating the plight of most people due to the unsatisfactory performance of SM Supermalls. SM allows Salvation Army workers and volunteers to put up kettle stands at the entrances and exits of malls. The SM Supermalls, especially of SM North Edsa, serves as the venue of the annual Red Shield Appeal launching, while 24 promotional posters are released from strategic places of the malls. This year, SM Supermalls does it again with a caroling kicking spirit.

Bedan Law Alumni homecoming

THE GAMMA LAMBDA ASSOCIATION, INC. (GLOP) Bedan with The Law Class of 1981 (Silver Jubilarians) and The Law Class of 1956 (Golden Jubilarians), present "Kaginhawaan Gamit Ang Batas: An Annual Homecoming & Fellowship Night." Honorable Antonio V. Pangandaman, Dean Jesus Orbe Philippines, will be the guest of honor and speaker. The event will be held at the Kalayaan Hall, Grand Stairs, Greenhills, San Juan. Alumni Manila section 1 Kuya Dennis Wong at P1,500 per available at the SBC Alumni Office, Mendiola, Manila. For more information, call 736-1000 or 0917-8012222.



Hotels gain tax perks for renovation work

Modernization estimated to cost P855M

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS (BOI) granted tax perks to two hotel modernization projects worth a combined P855 million.

One project was Philippine Hoteliers Inc.'s P626 million renovation of rooms that have been worn out "due to high occupancy in the past years."

A member of the Thailand-based Dusit Hotels and Resort chain, PHI operates Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City.

The company wants renovation done on 520 rooms to improve their quality and maintain the hotel's competitiveness.

Work is expected to be completed by August 2007.

PHI's project also covers renovation of all banquet facilities and restaurants; upgrade of its coffee shop to include a bakery and coffee station; addition of a new restaurant; renovation of stores and air-conditioning systems; and construction of a spa.

BOI said the project qualified for pioneer status considering that it would need P1 million for each room—excluding the cost of land—exceeding the minimum required investments.

BOI noted that the Department of Tourism endorsed the proposed Dusit project for registration.

The other project is Macias Shangri-la Hotel & Resort Inc.'s P181.6-million modernization program for 160 rooms in its facility in Lapulapu City, Cebu.

The all-Filipino Virgin Island firm wants to upgrade the amenities and amenities of the entire Ocean Wing guest rooms, including refurbishing of the rooms, ballroom, lobby and lounge, and restaurant.

BOI said the company's income tax rate exemption would be computed based on the revised On-line investments and the total investments Macias Shangri-La has brought into the country since it started business here in 1998.

Both projects are also entitled to duty-free importation of capital equipment, as well as other fiscal and non-fiscal incentives.

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BUSINESS Monday

E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph

Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Egana

Underemployment: Worse than unemployment

7.8 million Filipinos have work that do not earn them sufficient pay

By Doris C. Dumlao

EDEC (NOT HIS REAL NAME), WHO finished a two-year hotel management technical course, hopes to land a full-time job to bolster support his wife and one-year-old son. Either that, or leave the country and join his father as a construction worker in Saudi Arabia.

But for now, the 24-year-old Caloocan native cannot make both ends meet by working as a contractual employee for a marketing agency that fills the janitorial and other blue-collar manpower requirements of a major government financial institution.

He earns P335 a day if his employer can't afford yet the P23 daily increase in minimum wage recently approved by the Wage Board but has promised to give it retroactively)—barely enough to cover household expenses, including the P1,200 monthly housing rent in Cavite.

He will augment the family budget by working as an Excel screwdriver, likewise as a contractual employee of another staffing agency earning minimum wage.

"Hindshirt ko po nag-apply sa Cavite Technopark (at a computer technician) para hindi na ako(managers (I mind-)apply for a job at the Cavite Technopark but they didn't call back anymore," Eric recalls.

Then, he decided that making use of his training at STI College could wait. He has stayed in his current job for about a year now, notwithstanding the low pay, limited job security and limited prospects of skills enhancement and career mobility.

One of millions

Eric is among the millions of Filipinos who are underemployed, referring to a situation in which a worker is employed, but not to the desired capacity, whether in terms of compensation, hours, or level of skill and experience.

The Philippine labor force survey defines underemployment only in terms of hours for additional hours of work and measures 7.8 million of Filipinos falling in this category as of July 2006.

Underemployment, which causes low or productivity and wages, is seen as a major setback problem in the Philippines than unemployment, based on a new Social Labor Index that attempts to measure "decent work."

Among other labor challenges confronting the government are inequity in pay between agriculture and industry as well as the reality that some workers still receive pay below the minimum basic pay, says Teresa Dimaba, chief labor and employment officer at the labor standards services division of the Department of Labor and Employment, during a recent workers forum hosted by the Asian Development Bank.

Dimaba says there had been some progress in the country's goal to cite its "decent work" deficit, although a lot of hurdles remain.

The "decent work" concept evolved as a response to address the formidable social and labor challenges posed by globalization, introduced by the International Labor Organization in 1999. It is defined as "opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity."

In a paper delivered during the forum at ADB, Peralta says the Philippine Labor Index (PLI) in 2000 (=to 2004 ranged) from 71 to 74 versus the ideal index of 100. The decent work deficit was estimated at 26 to 29%.

"In the opportunities for work dimension, concern is raised on the need to create more full-time workers the proportion of part-time employment are still substantial and this bears on workers' productivity and their incomes," Dimaba says.

Based on the National Statistics Office's latest labor force survey as of July 2006,

New phone offers seamless mobile music experience

Drag-and-drop feature for easy downloading

By Abigail L. Ho

MOTOROLA CAPITALIZES ON THE Filipinos' endless love affair with music when it launched the MotoROKR E2 handset, a function-packed mobile phone designed with the music enthusiast in mind.

"With the MotoROKR, consumers can enjoy the freedom and convenience of carrying their favorite music with them all the time. Motorola is giving people a seamless mobile music experience with a portfolio of devices like the new MotoROKR leading the way," said Motorola Philippines marketing head Mac Lozada.

He said the MotoROKR E2 made it easier for music lovers or creative music fans their PCs to their phones via a USB 2.0 cable.

All a user has to do is drag-and-drop digital music files from his PC-stored music collection to his handset. With the USB 2.0 cable, the transfers are completed in mere seconds.

Armed with an optional 2GB SD card, the device can store as many as 500 songs that can be enjoyed either with a standard wired earphone—the same one that can be used with an iPod or any other mobile music device—or with Bluetooth headsets.

It also allows simple music playback via dedicated music player buttons on the left side (play/pause, skip forward/backward, hold) and front of the handset.

Users can also listen to the radio as the MotoROKR E2 is equipped with a built-in FM radio functionality.

Lozada said his mobile phone model targeted mostly the youth market, particularly young professionals who want mostly on the go all the time, with the handset's candy bar form factor, large color screen and coveted music experience.

Motorola is the world's second biggest handset manufacturer, next to Finnish mobile device maker Nokia, according to research firm Strategy Analytics.

In the third quarter, Motorola's global handset shipment volumes grew 39 percent, the second fastest growth rate among all vendors in the world.

Nokia partners with Oracle on mobile device access

BOSTON: THE ENTERPRISE MOBILity arms Nokia and Oracle have teamed up to provide users of the Nokia 6630 and 6820 mobile devices access to some critical business applications even while out of the office.

The recent announcement, made during the Oracle OpenWorld event in San Francisco, allowed Nokia 6630 and 6820 users to remotely access Oracle mobile enterprise applications including Oracle Mobile Field Service and Siebel Wireless.

Oracle Mobile Field Service enables mobile access to relevant work schedules and job information, allowing field service dispatchers and their service representatives to collaborate more closely as work requests are created, updated and subsequently completed, according to Oracle.

Anand Subbiramaian, field service product strategy director at Oracle, said allowing remote access to such information would pave the way for more informed decisions, better customer service and higher worker productivity.

Oracle's Siebel Wireless application, on the other hand, allows users to connect to the Internet to view, edit and create information in their companies' Siebel Enterprise databases.

Oracle mobile product strategy senior director Guy Silverman said the Siebel Wireless applications gave users access to "competitive advantage" via mobile customer relationship management developments.

"Nokia and Oracle are now able to deliver essential mobile solutions to professionals: the ability to access real-time customer information. This is critical for executives, sales professionals, and field service personnel that spend a majority of their time away from their offices," said Chris Hotchkiss, director of alliances and industries marketing at Nokia.

"The combination of access to critical Oracle applications, combined with the best-of-class enterprise voice capabilities provided by the Nokia 6630 and Nokia 6820, make for a compelling mobile enterprise solution," he added.

Trading stocks online starts to pick up pace

By Cherrie L. Lucas

MORE FILIPINO INVESTORS WILL SOON find themselves buying and selling stocks over the Internet as they guess its sophistication and savvy.

This is what First Metro Securities chief Roberto Juanchito T. Dupont is betting on after his company launched its online stock brokerage facilities in Makati City last week.

"This is the emerging trend in the market," said the investment banker who also heads the stockbrokerage unit of Metrobank Trust and Trust Co. "More and more investors are becoming sophisticated."

Among the systems, Internet-savvy retail investors—who are also experienced stock market investors—can send themselves of timely market information and execute transactions on a real-time basis, Dupont said.

First Metro becomes the fifth stockbrokerage to offer its services to the public after BPI Securities Corp., Citisecurities, ATC Capital and Investaware Corp. and 2TradeAsia.com.

With only about 50,000 active investors in any one time, however, the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) may be too small to accommodate the growing ranks of online brokers.

This is especially true since the bulk of existing stock market investors entertain many about investing myths online, and many refuse to let go of old habits like speaking to stockbrokers and executing trades over the phone.

Open-minded investors

"But answers, therefore, may lie not in attracting more of the existing investors into the online stockbrokering fold, but in widening the investor base to include more people who are open to the idea of trading online.

"What our market must do is to expand the market, instead of just targeting a greater slice of the pie," Citisecurities president Ernesto Ruiz said.

If he has his way, online brokers should see more retail investors trading through their computers rather than high net worth investors.

"We want more people to participate in the market," he added. "But a whole paradigm shift must first occur."

In particular, Citisecurities is targeting investors below 45 years of age, many of whom are still flexible enough to learn the new mindset needed for online trading.

"Investors above 45 years of age are those who are normally setting trends," Ruiz said.

Ago adds, the Citisecurities chief noted that online stockbrokers are aimed mainly at retail investors rather than large fund managers who often require more focused attention from their brokers.

"Online systems are for people who can do it themselves, as opposed to those high net worth individuals who need full-service brokerage," he said.

Full-service brokerage system access to top-notch research material, broker advice, and what have calls "hand-holding"—close professional interaction between the investor and the stockbroker.

PSE backing

Investors who care only for valuation of their trades do not need to pay the higher commissions associated with full-service brokers and can easy-well explore the "do-it-yourself" route.

From the PSE—with its large roster of charge-averse member-brokers—is looking at online trading as a means to securing its future with the ranks of its more affluent peers around the region.

According to PSE president Francis Lim, he is counting on online brokers to help expand the exchange's retail investor base to include the younger and more affluent generations like call-center workers and overseas Filipino workers who have cash to spare.

"The PSE is pushing for online trading as it is a powerful tool to help develop the retail market," he said. "The experience in the more progressive bourses in the region attests to this fact."

"I strongly encourage our local brokers to invest in the technology as a means to developing their business," Lim added, explaining that online trading could very well be the entry point solution-starved brokers are looking for.

In a class, however, that online stock brokerage services will not grow exponentially overnight as the country continues to struggle with multibillion-fund hinder the development of the capital markets.

For one, Ruiz believes that local investors, for the most part, continue to lack the required sophistication.

"This is because there is no formal education about the stock market here," he said. "It's only since this we're trying to correct this."

At the same time, many prospective investors are still worried about the safety of their transactions, especially with numerous data stealers elsewhere seemingly get-rampered with by hackers.

"It would also help if Internet penetration would increase," he said, referring to the relatively low Internet penetration rate in the country. "But these issues are gradually being solved."

Lure of big profit

Nonetheless, online brokers like Dupont are encouraged by the recent performances of the stock markets, hoping that more people will be attracted to online trading to take advantage of potential returns.

"Whatever we launched this project last year, the PSE Index was only at 1,500," he said. "Look where it is now."

Despite the presence of greater returns on investments, it remains to be seen if the local market is ready to join the ranks of the United States, Japan and Korea where online trading has taken hold.

Brokers like Dupont and Ruiz are crossing their fingers.

Investing in creative industries

From page B2 ▸

consumers have, oftentimes, absolutely no idea of what new things they would like to buy. They only know about the old things. Market studies often fail because of this.

Innovative companies know this phenomenon to be true. So they focus on product creations using people and processes that seem to "get" what the market wants more often than others do because of some insightful or intuitive "revelation."

Design changes

So who are in the creative industries?

The most obvious are the ones producing films, shows, books, animated cartoons, art objects and the like and the ones investing new products and technological enhancements.

However, there are a lot of industries that are dependent on changes in design and style like clothes, houses, furniture and furnishings. They thrive on economy.

Less obvious are the ones who change production and assembling systems. Figure a way to make people more productive and discover ways and means to make life a little bit easier to live and enjoy.

Creativity can be as simple as the invention of Marconi—the two electric sockets instead of one—which started the electrical appliances empire. Or it can be as complex as sending men to Mars.

The Philippines must carve its own niche in the global market. If all we want to do is mass produce electronic devices, send nurses abroad and run dispatch TV shows, then we are destined.

Countries like Korea, Singapore and Japan invest heavily in the creative industries as they are shopping of global competitiveness.

We have to find our own way and just do it. And it is not just the government I am referring to. Private industries, unions and even the lowliest of entrepreneurs should begin thinking creativity and innovation.

They should trumpet values creation and go for changing business paradigms. The world does not reward the idea vain. But they pay a premium for the uniquely captivating.

Underemployment . . .

From page B6-1

the Philippines' underemployment rate is about 22.1 percent of the labor force versus the unemployment rate of only 8 percent.

The dimension on opportunities for work looks at whether persons who need work are able to find work that covers all forms of economic activity including self-employment, unpaid family work and wage employment in both formal and informal sectors.

"So, in our macro-indicator, the FLI and its dimension indices are signals for policy makers and practitioners on areas needing intervention," Perdido says, noting however that the index was not yet used as an official government indicator.

In five other dimensions are:

▸Freedom of choice of employment—work should be freely chosen and not forced on individuals; bonded and slave labor as well as child labor are unacceptable and should be eliminated;

▸Productive work—workers should have acceptable livelihoods that deliver fair incomes for themselves and their families while ensuring sustainable development and competitiveness of enterprises and countries;

▸Equity in work—women and men need to have equality of opportunity and treatment in work; it encompasses absence of discrimination at work and to access to work and ability to balance work with family life;

▸Security at work—safe work places should be ensured and workers health, livelihoods and pensions should be safeguarded; and,

▸Representation at work—workers should be treated with respect at work; they should be able to join organizations to represent their interests collectively, free to voice their concerns and participate in decision making about their terms and conditions of work.

"On the security of work dimension, attention should be focused on the expansion of social security membership so the coverage rates are still relatively low relative to what is contemplated under existing laws," Perdido says.

In the representation at work dimension, concern is raised on the low proportion of worker participation in non-establishment based associations, Perdido says.

The dimension freedom of choice of employment had the lowest downside, Perdido says, but the efforts to eliminate child labor and other forms of commercial exploitation should be sustained.

The FLI is seen as a complementary tool when related with other development indicators, such as growth in gross domestic product and human development index in monitoring the social and economic progress of the country particularly of its working population.

Overemployment

In a separate paper presented during the same forum of the Philippine Statistical Association, ILO manager for statistical development and analysis group Yoo Sook says it may also be worthy to look at issues relating to overemployment.

He noted that in many developing countries, many people belonging to the higher income brackets fall into the underemployed category because their cost afford not to have full-time jobs. On the other hand, he says poor people tend to be overemployed or forced to work for more hours than desired because they need to earn more.

In his paper measuring trends on decent work deficits across the globe, the Geneva-based Pesik says the shortfall had decreased to recent years.

"But this reduction was not uniform across income countries. Whereas high income countries saw a significant improvement, the situation deteriorated in low-income countries. Instead of witnessing a convergence, we are seeing a widening decent work gap between the rich and poor countries," he says.

The decent work deficit had increased in East Asia more than in any other region, although the shortfall remained in South Asia which includes India.

Advocating the use of an index that seeks to measure decent work, ILO believes the countries, instead of monitoring progress using simply the unemployment and employment rates is both inaccurate and inadequate.

"It is inaccurate, as a measure of job opportunities, because in countries plagued by high poverty and a lack of social safety nets the poor simply cannot afford to be unemployed and have no choice but to work," Pesik says.

"Secondly, the unemployment rate is inadequate, because it ignores the qualitative dimensions of work. The official ILO definition of employment is a very broad one. It may include someone with a menial job with low wages who has worked for only one hour during the reference period, and also someone with a well-paid, full-time job," he says.

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BUSINESS Monday

Investing in creative industries

By Eduardo A. Morato, Jr.
Professor, Ateneo Institute of Management

THERE IS TOO MUCH FOCUS ON PLAIN job creation in the Philippines. The government talks about 10 million jobs and the message is "any job will do." This type of thinking is what keeps this country poor.

There are no stalwart advances in stirring millions of Filipinos abroad, just a lot of labor dollars. The secret to any great society is its ability to create and innovate. And the secret weapon is the artist who crafts new art and the scientist who invents technologically superior products.

At the very core of this secret is state-of-the-art education and industries that will reinvent people's talents into paradigm-shifting creations.

We, as a nation, must begin to think bigger than we are. Being aware of the game will just leave us further behind. We need wonder in how Italy remains on top of the design world in shoes, bags, furniture, garments, this and other such facets of commercial art.

We must shed at the technological innovations of Silicon Valley or the ever-fascinating electronic gadgets of Japan. More shamefully, we must stop and pause to think "how on earth did Korea suddenly become the ultraveda darling of style. Aren't Filipinos supposed to be the entertainers of Asia?"

Creative milieu

The answer lies in advancing the creative industries. It is not any particular industry that can be neatly classified by the government.

It has to do more with how society brings together extremely creative people, who undergo a highly stimulating creative process, which produces astonishingly creative products, that have a very powerful impact on the creative milieu (home).

Allow me to discuss these four elements one by one.

In any society, there is the average person. They are the ordinary workers, professionals and managers. They keep the economy humming but they don't produce the exciting breakthroughs.

Then there are the gifted ones. Nerdy, eccentric, emotional, strange even, they are the hope of a wannabe great society.

If you drag them through the usual educational grind, they will die. Such geniuses may even kill the system. Like Einstein who had trouble passing his arithmetic classes and Bill Gates who dropped out of school.

For many children, their creativity quotient drops after the age of five. This is according to psychologists. The highly regimented, rational and structured learning systems that dull the students to left brain "reading, writing and arithmetic" stifle the creative mind.

So the Philippines to advance as a nation, it must invest in giftedness. In the few that will make the big difference. Not in just at the elementary to college levels that I am talking about.

It goes all the way to doctoral programs, specialized schools for artists and performers, industry R&D laboratories, technology incubators, and think tanks who do nothing but think and create.

Next is the creative process that must be embraced by the survivors of creative people. Schools and industries are often afraid to "let a thousand flowers bloom."

They are more concerned about setting standards that make everybody the same. They have a fetish for installing systems and procedures that regulate the behavior of their students and employees.

Experimentation

The new hallmarks of the creative process are creating many ideas and creating different ideas.

The former has to do with fecundity of experimentation and a preferential bias for the heuristic or trial-and-error process.

This is in contrast to the usual algorithmic one problem, one solution approach to learning in many schools and corporations.

The latter has to do with finding the unique but revolutionary idea that changes the way things are done. This means being extremely tolerant of mavericks and paradigm shifters. Rather than giving students a standard textbook, they should be encouraged to write their own original thoughts.

Rather than setting employees in "stitch in the learning," they should be allowed enough "tinkering, noodling and musing" time to pursue projects that might not result in anything, but then again, they might change the world.

The creative process thrives in a highly entrepreneurial environment where family environments matter under relaxed and nonthreatening conditions.

Creative people plus creative processes should produce creative products and services time and time again. A company like 3M, for example, mandates that 30 percent of its sales for the next five years should be composed of entirely new products.

Nine out of 10 inventions and innovations might not make it but the 11th innovation should more than make up for everything. The same thinking goes for venture capital corporations.

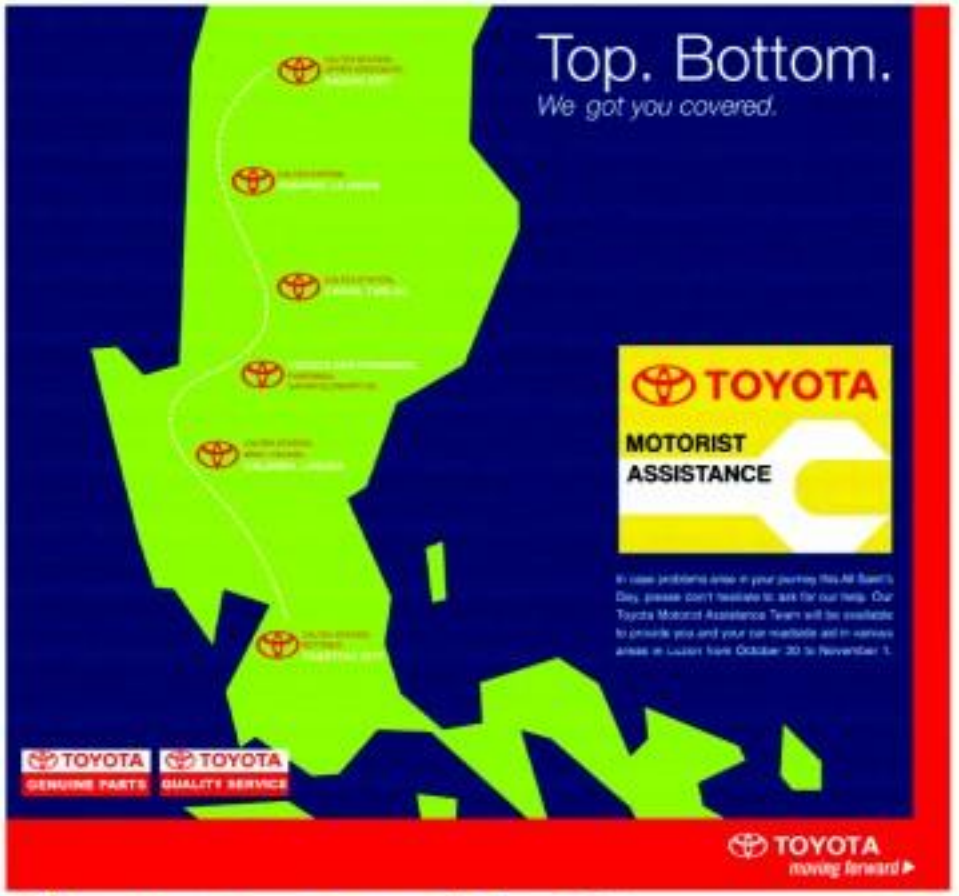
New products

In the world of Hollywood, movie producers are able to choose from "shit scripts to get "the winning one." Another US company, Idea, specializes in designing new products for businesses.

Their approach is to produce scale product prototypes and improve demonstrably upon them. For example, their original inspiration for the computer mouse was a home club.

Finally, the true test of creativity is the impact it manifests in the marketplace. Many new creations are introduced to consumers without any market study.

But that is understandable because



CALTEX DENSO Shakey's EMILCOR INC.

BUSINESS Monday
Business/Features Editor Margie Quiroga Espino

What's your country's gross national happiness

Happiest people on earth pay RP a visit

BHUTANESE delegation in Bilac Bohol in their traditional attire.

By Teodoro B. Bagsulat Jr.
Contributor

SELDOM DOES ONE find rich agricultural lands in the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan. But even more rarely does one meet a grumpy or miserable Bhutanese.

How could you when the greatest aspiration of Bhutan's revered King is the pursuit of happiness for his people.

"We seek, explicitly, one outcome in our public policy: The happiness of our citizens," says Lyonpo Jangsay Yeshey, the genial Minister of Agriculture of Bhutan who was the guest of honor during the International Fair Festival organized by the South East Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment (SEARICE) last Oct. 27 to 29 in Bohol.

The Minister says this way of thinking was conceptualized three decades ago by their King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck when he was only 17.

After visiting the remote villages and listening to the counsel of the elders, the King realized that progress of a country is not measured by its material wealth. Instead, he developed a new philosophy called "Gross National Happiness."

Witty put

Yeshey calls the GNH a "witty pun" to the Gross National Product, the dollar-GNP, as a development strategy "subverts social, cultural, spiritual and other noneconomic values are incompatible from the materialistic culture."

Guided by that policy, Yeshey says the government provides free education and health services to all Bhutanese because wisdom and health make a person happy.

To protect its lands, the King decreed that the country's forest cover should never go below 60 percent. Presently, the cover stands at 72 percent.

In agriculture, Minister Yeshey says Bhutan was resorting to propagate organically-grown products to make their citizens healthier and to sell the surplus overseas.

He says globalization has persuaded countries to overemphasize their need to increase material production and developing products at the same neglecting family values and cultural heritage.

"We're producing too much junk. But will junk make us happy? Is money the only thing that makes people happy?" Yeshey says.

Nestled between India and China, with a population of 600,000 spread over a mountainous, icy region of 357,000 square kilometers, Bhutan is one of the smallest countries in the world.

With only 8 percent of the land area declared as arable, half of which is planted with rice, Bhutan imports half of its rice requirements.

No complaints

Despite the harsh environment and the lack of arable lands, the Bhutanese, who are 95 percent Buddhist, have no complaints.

In a survey conducted by the government last year, 97 percent of the population considered themselves, "generally happy."

Most people might not fully grasp what the nation-hood happiness is all about.

Shingay Dorji, the equally cheerful aide of Minister Yeshey explains that happiness is having more peace and being content with what you have.

"In Bhutan, we do not look at the stars. Instead, we look at the ground. When we aspire too much and do not reach the stars, we end up disappointed," he says.

This is easy to say than Bhutanese prefer to be poor, Shingay stresses.

The Royal Government promises development through the four pillars of the Gross National Happiness, namely, conservation of the environment, conservation of heritage and culture, good governance and equitable economic wealth.

Shingay explains that conservation of the environment means trade as while having good governance means fair justice and equal rights to everyone.

He also says preserving the traditional tiro varieties is one of the "happiness-directed" goals of the Royal Government.

"Whenever we start a project, we only consider one goal—will that bring happiness to the people?" he adds.

Enjoying Bohol

The reindeer was visibly pained on the ever-smiling faces of the Bhutanese delegation. During the three-day festival that farmers from Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and the Philippines, the Bhutanese unreservedly mingled and socialized to their hearts' content.

One farmer from Bohol, says that the Bhutanese were the only ones talking to them even if the only Visayan phrase they knew was "Maayong Buntag" (Good day).

"Friends, family health and tradition are things that make us truly happy," Minister Yeshey says.

Without a coastal area in his land-locked country, Yeshey, who spent an entire afternoon in the beaches of Panglao, says he found all of these and even more in Bohol.

Medical tourism: Potential for the Philippines

By Hazel Sarah D. Federico
Contributor

BERCUDES RODIL, A CEBUBORN, visited the Philippines to get a second opinion from St. Luke's Medical Center. A doctor in Canada had advised her that due to her periodic bleeding, her cervix had to be removed.

Doubtful of her doctor's diagnosis, she decided to consult Filipino physicians. After taking medication for a few weeks, she went home with her uterus intact and the bleeding healed.

This is what we call medical tourism—the act of traveling to another country to obtain low-cost, world-class medical treatment. Medical tourists usually enjoy the attractions and the beauty of the country while undergoing medical treatment.

People from developing countries tend to travel to the United States or other developed nations to obtain medical care, which is usually not available in their own countries.

Here's the reverse.

Healthcare costs in wealthy nations have risen, driving their citizens in search for affordable yet good health care elsewhere. Time magazine's July issue reported that elective operations by surgeons in India, Thailand, Singapore, inevitably cost only a quarter of or as low as a tenth of those in the EU or Britain. These packages often include hotel accommodation, car transfers, and post-operative vacations.

Some those in-patient medical treatment in the Philippines because in Canada thousands are on the waiting lists for much-needed treatment or surgery. They often have to wait for months, even years. In the United Kingdom, patients have to wait for hundreds for surgical procedures.

The uninsured in the US face financial issues—for listed bypass surgery an insured patient needs $111,000 to $175,000 while he can get the same surgery in Thailand for only $12,000, including airfare, hotel accommodation and recreation packages.

Empowering consumers

The Philippines has InPhyno, the first and only website that connects medical tourists. InPhyno started as an online community of doctors and dentists with the aim of "empowering the consumer."

Here can register in the website and select medical packages bundled with hotel accommodation, car transfer service, tour guide and a caregiver if the will of the patient likes shopping. Says she can visit local malls. If he brings his child, a caregiver can help care for him.

Check out the procedures and treatments available, what hospitals or institutions offer them, and how much they would cost. InPhyno has spokesmodel some of the country's most respected hospitals offering medical tourism in the Philippines: St. Luke's Medical Center, Makati Medical Center, Metropolitan Medical Center and Asian Hospital Medical Center.

InPhyno gives a lot of options to medical tourists who can compare the prices and services of several hospitals.

Aside from InPhyno, renowned cosmetic surgeons like Vicki Belo, Manny and Ito Calayan, and beauty consultant Kaby Reyes among others, promote their services internationally through their exclusive websites. They usually tie up with a certain resort or hotel for the medical tour kits to stay in.

"What a more spoon for business, it should be well advertised," says Aby S. Uy, president and CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of InPhyno. Uy believes that medical tourism needs endorsements.

Aby Uy says while the Department of Health launched medical tourism in the country last January, the international press didn't pick up the story.

He has been attending medical meetings and seminars conducted by the Department of Health (DOH) for a year now but when medical tourism is brought up, the DOH would say "we are not ready yet."

To this, Uy replies, "we have to start with what we have."

"The reason we have medical tourism is that we have money and that there are many doctors who can pay for our competitive service," he adds.

InPhyno and a hospital South Holidays City, Asian Hospital, are organizing a Philippine Medical Tourism Congress. Happens June 20 to 21.

Uy says the country needs this expansion.

"Filipino doctors and nurses are needed close to the US, half of the doctors are Filipinos or are Filipino-trained. If we can't persuade consultations done abroad, tell they not be good enough for ordinary people abroad," Uy adds.

Time magazine also reported that about 25 percent of physicians in the United States are from MDs abroad.

IT's advantages

University of San and the Pacific (USAP) economist Maria Cherry Lyn S. Rodolfo agrees that "our main advantage" due to our business resources. Another advantage is our English and communication skills. Just as business process outsourcing companies like Teleweb, IBM, Dell, Convergys have flocked to our shores, medical tourists can easily communicate with our surgeons.

Thailand has been pioneering medical tourism for years now along with India, Singapore and Malaysia. Rodolfo and Winston E. Padajong say the Philippines is missing out on potential revenues enjoyed by Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and India.

Healthcare expenditure worldwide amounts to $3 trillion annually. Asia spent $300 billion on healthcare services in 2000 (by 2010, it could reach $600 billion, with japan alone spending $322 billion, India, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia have created 77 percent of the global expenditure.

In India, merging medical expertise and tourism became government policy when finance minister Jaswant Singh, called for India to become a "global health destination" this year. It is serving the south American countries like Bhutan and Bhutan should who bring their patients to India involved surrounding for medical treatment. As an incentive, some 121 companies like Infosheath share with their employees up 25 percent of savings in medical treatment.

When Edy Uy created the InPhyno website under IMOMED last May 1999, medical tourism was almost unheard of. He first envisioned a website that would make it easy for patients to consult or look for doctors and ask questions online.

"Filipinos want to their sicknesses to save, on labor consulting colleagues," Uy said.

Uy added a feature in his website (Ask a Doc) wherein they could ask questions about health without any obligations, giving them more information. Some of what kind of health professional to consult for their specific needs.

They noticed that online visitors were mostly OFWs asking questions online. Uy and his employees thought these OFWs might return to the country for good. So, InPhyno's strategy was to help them, so they started offering medical packages online, both for Filipinos and foreigners.

Uy says the country could do what India did last year when they had a dumpsite of expatriate Indians. There are some eight million Filipinos abroad. The country would prepare to lodge revenues if the country comes to their health needs and loss of their families.

Retirement law

The government is pushing for a Philippine Retirement Law, where OFWs and foreigners can invest in the medical tourism industry. With the investments, Uy suggests they be given a visa to stay for a certain period of time. The 2001 Investments Priorities Plan, Medium Term Philippine Development Plan and the Public Investment Program (PIP) 1 will include the investment and release of capital from investors, especially.

Rodolfo suggests steps to push for health tourism:

Upgrading of accreditation standards to include not only the facilities or location but the equipment used by the personnel involved in taking care of the patients. The country can first encourage Filipino repatriates to go to the Philippines for medical treatment and a vacation. This would also open up more opportunities as international investment companies will start seeing the Philippines creating a bigger market.

This will attain the massive deployment of nurses, doctors and caregivers as there will be enough revenues to pay for higher salaries.

The government should also determine what to invite should be. Thailand first made cosmetic surgery including sex transplant famous.

The country should also intensify the promotion of our museums and plastic surgery that are becoming prominent. The establishments of celebrities' lipo and massage treatments would also be added.

Government needs a framework for medical tourism. The investment plans and regulations are geared specifically for medical tourism. Specific laws covering the rights of medical malpractice among medical workers and the degree of responsibility or liability, just in case something happens to the patient, should be outlined.

Rural Banks Expand Mobile Phone Banking Services with GCash

It was a monthly ritual that Evelyn did not mind making. She walked to the bloodletting from her employer's Makati condominium to the mall and made her way to the Bantham Globe Hub outlet at the Power Plant Mall. Evelyn handed over a thousand pesos to the smiling salesclerk, filled out a form, showed her ID, and paid the P15 service fee. The cash-to-processing fee. A few minutes later, Evelyn's phone beeped with the familiar message "You have received 1,000 of GCash from 09...Available Bal: on 9/15/09 at 12:40 PM"

It only took Evelyn another five minutes to buy instructions to transfer her GCash balance directly to her brother's savings account with the New Rural Bank of Victorias (Bank Victorias) in Bacolod City. Before, Evelyn's brother does not own a mobile phone but through the new service, Text-A-Deposit, Evelyn can send GCash directly to his Bank Victorias deposit account.

Evelyn returned to work, happy at the thought that later, during her brother's afternoon break, he would go to Bank Victorias' Bacolod City branch, present his ID, and claim the cash. She was sure that upon arriving home tonight, he will be able to give the money to his mother. The amount was Evelyn's monthly "allowance" to her mother, who saved a fraction of the sum and used the rest for food.

Evelyn used to send money via branch-to-branch deposit to her mother's deposit account with a large commercial bank. She had to pay a hundred pesos for every transaction, and her mother had to wait for a day and travel for two hours to and from their house to Bacolod City to claim the cash.

"I also tried the remittance services of courier companies; they were charging a processing fee of 150 pesos which was 15% of the amount I was sending. Now, I only have to shell out 10 pesos! Imagine how much I get to save using Text-A-Deposit," Evelyn relates.

The introduction of GCash, Globe Telecom's electronic money service and subsequently, person-to-person and phone-to-phone (P2P) money transfer, greatly benefits Evelyn and other subscribers who regularly send and transfer funds to suppliers, shops, and even regular "allowances" to loved ones and family members in the province.

The widespread use of short messaging services (SMS), in addition to the introduction of GCash, has facilitated domestic and international remittance of money. Like Evelyn, many other Filipinos working away from their places of origin (within and outside the Philippines) have started using SMS-based services to transfer money to their loved ones. In Evelyn's case, GCash-to-processing fee. A few minutes later, Evelyn's phone beeped with the familiar message "You have received 1,000 of GCash from 09...Available Bal: on 9/15/09 at 12:40 PM" Globe introduced GCash in late 2004 as a service that "turns mobile phones into virtual electronic wallets". Subscribers can load electronic money (cash-in), store the "money" in their "wallets", and use it to pay bills, make purchases, or transfer money that relatives and friends can convert to cash (cash-out). All transactions—cash-in, cash-out, payments, authorization, and confirmations—are conducted through SMS.

When GCash was launched in 2004, program managers of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) supported Microenterprise Access to Banking Services (MABS) Program quickly recognized its potential as a platform for microfinance banking applications. The MABS Program aims to substantially increase the level of banking services being provided to the microenterprise sector by assisting rural banks to develop the capability to profitably provide loan and deposit services to the sector. Although the Program's core activity is delivering technical assistance, it also introduces and develops new and low-cost banking technologies to further improve its participating banks' efficiency, productivity, and outreach.

The mobile phone is the widely used communications tool in the Philippines. The ubiquitous device is the one thing most Filipinos can't leave home without—from blue-collar workers (the hapless drivers to moneyed homeowners and their lawyers. As of end-2005, 41 million Filipinos, almost half of the population, were mobile phone subscribers; almost 1 billion SMS are sent daily. The pay-and platform, and the availability of small-denomination prepaid cards further gave members of the lower economic segments access to mobile services. It is estimated that more than 90% of mobile users are prepaid accounts. These mobile phone users are the same small businesses that usually transact with rural banks and other microfinance institutions, making small payments and depositing small amounts regularly.

Seeing this and with the support of MABS, the Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines (RBAP) and Globe Telecom entered into an agreement in November 2004 to develop and launch mobile phone banking applications for clients of rural banks. The first service was the Text-A-Payment, that allows micro loan borrowers of accredited rural banks who are Globe or Touch Mobile subscribers to repay their microloans via smart stations through SMS via GCash. This service reduces the clients' transaction costs since they no longer need to make the trip to the bank to make a payment. On the other hand, it also reduces the bank's transaction costs and risks because it eliminates field collections. Banks are able to pass on these savings to their clients through reduced interest rates and service charges. Text-A-Payment also greatly reduces fraud and theft since the transactions are fast and secure.

In 2006, MABS developed and introduced Text-A-Deposit, the service is now being offered by a number of rural banks. Bank Victorias is offering Text-A-Payment, GCash cash-in and cash-out services and Text-A-Deposit in all its five branches – Bacolod City, Victorias, San Carlos, Kabankalan and Bohol City. These new services allow clients to pay their loans, send money, receive remittances, and deposits to or receive remittances through their bank account via SMS for fees as low as 1%. In particular, the Text-A-Deposit service greatly reduces the costs of remittances and bank transfers, since fund transfers are made directly to their bank deposit accounts. Like Evelyn's brother, depositors who do not have mobile phones can still receive remittances, as long as they have an account with a GCash accredited rural bank.

The widespread use of GCash and the banking applications it supports largely lies in the ability to reach the widest value or pay for goods and services at a significant number of retailers. Globe, RBAP, and MABS are working to help to expand the ecosystem of merchants, especially microenterprises, who can now more easily utilize GCash to sell goods and services and then settle their GCash sales directly to their bank accounts through Text-A-Deposit services with an accredited rural bank. There are now more than 200 GCash accredited rural bank branches approved to offer GCash services. Clients can now exchange cash-in or cash cash-out GCash, Globe's electronic money facility, at any accredited rural bank.

In addition to regular cash-in and cash-out services some banks are now facilitating payroll services using GCash. Philippine Rural Bank (Iloilo), Inc. (PRB Iloilo), a rural bank with a network of 27 branches extending from Tagaytay to in Pasig City, is offering Text-A-Sweldo (Text-A-Salary) for their employees and for other interested companies in their area. They have also recently started initiatives using GCash; this drives the use of GCash and is helping to expand the ecosystem of GCash in their community even further since Merchants and business owners in the community are also seeing the benefits of mobile phone banking. Ronald, a Globe Auto-load subdealer who owns three stores all located in the City center, has been a depositor of PR Bank for two years now and recently started using GCash services when the bank started offering cash-in/cash-out services. Ronald now uses GCash to pay his distributors. "Loading offer the operations of three stores takes up much of my time. Using GCash has been a timesaver! I can complete transactions even while on the go. I also like the fact that I no longer need to carry cash around."

Alan, a client of Bank Victorias for eight years now, is also a recent mobile phone banking convert. Alan is also a Globe electronic load sub-dealership. He also uses GCash to pay his distributor. "GCash has made making transactions more convenient. I also welcome the increase in weekend limit from PhP 10,000 to PhP40,000. I use cash-in more GCash value and complete more transactions."

In the coming months, rural banks will be launching other initiatives to further promote the use of mobile phone banking applications and expand the ecosystem of users/banks. Expect early interventions to include simple devices that can allow owners and cashiers who can now all accept electronic payments using GCash to earn more money.

Electronic and mobile banking are fast proving to be the technological solution to providing less costly, easy-to-access, and fast and efficient banking services to previously unbanked clients. Digging his keynote speech at the 53rd Annual Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines National Convention, Philippine Vice-President Noli de Castro lauded the innovations of the rural banks and their use of Globe's GCash as having the potential to expand financial services to the countryside.

Ultimately, the widespread use and acceptance of mobile transactions will benefit the lower-income segments those previously unbanked and those who resisted to economic growth of the mainstream economy covered by credit and debit cards. People like Evelyn, Ronald, and Alan —who will greatly benefit from a less hundred pesos of savings per money transaction.

Evelyn ended the day very happy with the thought that her mother would have a nice dinner that evening. She had called her neighbor and confirmed that her mother had received her "allowance."

The new frontier: Tax Risk Management

THE OCCURRENCE OF NUMEROUS corporate scandals in the United States in 2000 triggered the enactment of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and similar legislations in other countries. As a consequence, there has been an increasing awareness in business organizations of the importance of risk management and good corporate governance.

Tax, as one of the key costs in business, needs to be properly managed along with the others. Thus, tax risk management is now becoming a focus of attention in both commercial organizations and even revenue authorities in developed countries. It is for this reason that Price waterhouse Coopers (PwC) developed a guide on Tax Risk Management last year, on which this article is based.

What is tax risk? Tax risk means different things to different people. This is not surprising as people have different aptitudes for risk, depending on their personality or their organizational culture within an organization. Fundamentally, tax risk is the possibility of loss or hazard deriving from tax exposures. Tax exposures are the consequences the type of tax risk they are prepared to assume, they need to understand what the risks are. Tax risks may be classified into seven broad categories:

Transactional risk relates to the risks and exposures associated with the application of tax laws, regulations and decisions to specific transactions undertaken by a company. Probably the most significant transactional risk is tax planning that is not properly implemented. Many tax exercises are sensitive to the underlying facts. A conclusion that holds for one set of facts may not hold if even a small variation occurs in the implementation.

Operational risk refers to the underlying risks of applying tax laws, regulations and administrative and judicial decisions to the routine everyday business operations of the company. The key to note is how involved the tax function is in the business operations. Operational risk will be reduced if tax is heavily involved in operations and there are formal sign-off procedures in place.

Compliance risk concerns how well an organization is meeting its tax compliance obligations. The risks here primarily relate to the preparation, completion and review of an organization's tax returns—for all tax types—and to have effective responses are to respond to queries from tax authorities. Dealing with compliance risk involves a cost-risk trade-off. It should be possible to design control systems that achieve a zero-error goal for tax returns. However, if the cost of such controls would be prohibitive—and, in most instances, this would be the case—a middle ground where some errors are expected but the associated risks are small and the cost savings significant might be a more effective balance.

Financial accounting risk—the need to ensure effective "provisioning" of deferred income taxes in the financial statements—has been brought into sharper focus by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act passed in the United States in 2002. Because the law requires companies to document and test their internal controls over financial reporting, CFOs are becoming less tolerant of unwise adjustments to tax accounts. The result is risk here may be that the "no surprise" attitude may foster a risk averse attitude in tax directors, which may lead to accounting opportunities being rejected even though the overall level of risk would otherwise be within the levels of the company would be reasonably prepared to accept.

Portfolio risk refers to the overall aggregate level of risk inherent in transactional, operational and compliance activities as a whole. It examines the interaction between these three specific risk areas. Such as, how should a company proceed or manage a proposed transaction if it is below the company's risk threshold for transactional risk, but carries a higher degree of compliance and/or operational risk?

Management risk arises in cases where a company fails to systematically and effectively manage the risks. To assess the degree of management risk, a key question is: Does your organization have a documented tax risk management policy, and the required resources to manage tax risks? A half-hearted approach may leave the company open to "surprises" or missed opportunities.

Reputational risk refers to the risks of damaged reputation. The question to be asked is: how large would you be if your company's tax problems were headline news in tomorrow's newspaper? Even if the company's business practices are entirely legitimate, the adverse publicity may impact negatively on the company's overall business.

Managing tax risks must be among the priorities of a company's management, and no less than the board of directors or as the least, the audit committee of the board should take the lead role. Formulating and documenting the tax risk management policy is the first step. No doubt, a documented tax risk management policy that is enforced by the board is crucial for good corporate governance.

Of the seven risks, perhaps the two key risks the board should focus on are portfolio risk and reputational risk. The board should have a general understanding of the company's risk profile as well as the impact that the company's tax positions (or lack thereof) may have on its reputation. But how far the board should go is still an open question. Suffice it to say that in the post-world.com era of governance need, more involvement by the board than what has been normally practiced does seem appropriate.

The CEO and the CFO are expected to provide high-level input into the tax strategy design and should be using the latter as a framework for participating in significant tax-related decisions on both the transactional side and the operational side. They clearly have an interest in the figures in the accounts and hence, in the financial accounting risk. They are also responsible for monitoring how tax risk is being managed and how the tax department is performing. While the board will approve the strategy, in practice it is the head of tax that will set the tone on tax risk management for the rest of the company. It is therefore critical that the head of tax, the CEO and the CFO, and the board are in agreement on the company's tax risk management policy.

Equally important is tax risk management is the role of the finance department for it is almost always involved in the implementation of significant transactions and in the production of detailed information for the tax returns. Not to be forgotten is the role of the operational people who are responsible for making decisions with potentially significant tax implications. Do they understand what risks they are taking, when they need to consult, when they can act without consulting, and what happens when something goes wrong? Will their performance be measured on a profit after tax or that they will not ignore the income tax implications of their decisions or actions?

The other key stakeholder in tax risk management are the external auditors and the tax advisors. External auditors have to understand both the policy and where the risks are being taken so they can plan their audit of the financial accounts. On the other hand, external advisors, who may or may not be the auditors, need to understand the corporate appetite for risk to help them filter out unsuitable ideas and deliver more appropriate advice.

In any case, tax risk management needs to be a part of a company's overall risk management policy and has to be within its overall risk strategy. It is our guarantee that can spell relentless management to ensuring its commitments and can withstand the pressures of future challenges.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is chair and senior partner of Isla Lipana & Co., a member firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers. Feedback at tmquel@isla-ca.com.ph)

MAPping the Future

Tommy H. Liquete

View of RP . . . From page B1-1

stinging voice, he questioned its accuracy and asked for its basis.

The presenter of the research paper replied he needs to defend the integrity of his data without leaving the Malaysian's heated pitch.

Like a seasoned diplomat, he modest answering the question correctly and turned over control what he left were some of the economic problems that Malaysia is going through at present.

Mercifully, the Malaysian did not pursue his point further and quietly accepted the not so pleasant observation about his country.

Recommendation

When the subject of equity investments came up, a GE-based U.S. analyst who led the discussion was asked about the recommendation good areas for investments.

He quickly answered: "China, India and the Philippines."

Pressed to explain about his third choice, he explained that "he is bullish on the Philippines because it has turned the corner and has good economic fundamentals."

Having the evening outfit, a Japanese investment banker talked to me and about the re-dominance of the Philippines as an investment site.

He said the recommendation was supported by the data gathered by his company's research staff.

"But," he continued, "if you watch TV, most of the things I see about Philippines (are) are military coups, political fighting, riot and killing of foreigners."

I gave (them) no less explaining to him that local and foreign media tend to exaggerate the news and that things were not that bad as they have been presented.

What, in a sense, saved the night for me was a Taiwanese who talked up to us in the manner of our talk.

When he heard I was from the Philippines, he remarked he has visited Cebu and Boracay and that he had a nice time. That statement threw a smile from the deafening Japanese.

(For feedback, please write to tquiabel@philippinecom.com.ph)

BUSINESS Monday

View of RP from outside

LAST WEEK, I ATTENDED A CONFERENCE in Guiyu, China on the latest funds and equity investment ideas in the international market.

In earlier times, meetings of this nature were held in Hong Kong, Singapore or other Asian financial centers. It is a tribute to China's strong economy that it's now considered a significant venue for discussions on financial deals.

The meeting was attended by executives of banks, investment companies and financial institutions based in Asia.

The participants were apprised of the new or hybrid instruments in the market that can generate additional capital or enhance the value of existing investment programs.

The discussion of some of the instruments sounded like an alphabet soup: CDO (Collateralized Debt Obligation); CBO/CDO (Commercial Real Estate-CDO); CLO (Collateralized Loan Obligation); SPECS (Economic Participation in CLO Securities) and CMBS (Commercial Mortgage Backed Securities).

The discussion was preceded by an analysis of the economic policies of the United States, the economies of emergent India, Russia and Brazil and, as expected, investment opportunities in China.

Outlook

A London-based economist said China was "the wave of the future." He predicted that its growth would eclipse all other countries, including the United States which was hobbled by record deficits caused by service financial and foreign affairs problems (read: Iraq).

After citing various facts and figures, he stated what he considered unmistakable proof of China's economic growth: The volume of its steel imports is the highest in the world.

Corporate Securities Info
Raul Fabella

In his book, a nation's wealth is directly proportional to its beef importation!

An international investment company presented its study and forecast on the economic outlook in Asia for a 12-month period.

Its research showed China, Taiwan and India on top of the list. They were given an "overweight" rating, which means their development is expected to outshine all others.

Next on the rung with a "market weight" rating were Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, the Philippines and Thailand.

Although Hong Kong is a province of China, it is given a separate economic status because of its strong standing in the world's economy.

The observation about the Philippines reads: "Illiquid, but better macro and good micro situations/growth."

Fair rating

At the bottom of the list—with an "underweight" rating—were Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia.

The outlook for Australia is "moderately constructive but lacks opportunities elsewhere." Indonesia has "downside earnings risk and over-extended market." Malaysia is "excessively negative but potential lagged play."

A Malaysia banker did not take kindly to the gloomy forecast for his country; he s

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Fr. Left: FPA, Mrs. Mylene Quimones, Engr. Edward Quimones - Pres. and Gen. Manager, Mr. S. Soo, Mr. Edward Go.

Hyundai Makati
Fr. Left: FPA, Mr. Alan Law - BMP Pres., Mr. S. Soo, Mr. Edward Go - HARI Chair

Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI), the official distributor of Hyundai vehicles in the Philippines, takes much pride in being certified as the first Hyundai Elite dealership network in the world, after successfully undergoing the stringent series of evaluation integrated in the Dealer Enhancement Program (DEP) by Hyundai Motor Co. Along with it, three local Hyundai dealers, Hyundai E. Rodriguez, Hyundai La Union,and Hyundai Makati were also awarded as the first Hyundai Elite dealers in the world, as per the results from the DEP Evaluation Team who recently came to the country. Launched in 2005, the DEP is an all-encompassing program where dealers undergo a stringent scrutiny of their facilities and operations, from their showrooms, warehouses, service centers, and sales personnel and process to ensure that every dealer in the world is in sync with Hyundai's high standards.

LIFESTYLE
Editor Cheiz Banal-Formoso
Lifestyle Editor Lito B. Zulueta

DETAIL of angel in Cementerio del Norte

'In the shadow of thy wings we rest'

Key Manila cemeteries have the best examples of funerary architecture in the Philippines

PANTEON de Familia Jalandoni

CHILD'S tomb in La Loma

AMERICAN Freeman Memorial

Text and photos by
Manuel Maximo Lopez del Castillo-Mecha
Contributor

CEMETERIES ARE CONSIDered cities of the dead. Usually enclosed by high walls, they remain virtual ghost towns for much of the year, their silence broken only every now and then by funeral processions and burials.

It is only during the much-celebrated All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day that they burst with the activity of the living as those who are left behind pay their respects to the dead, bringing with them the trappings of daily life.

But there are more to cemeteries than the pervasive sombre—if eerie—atmosphere. From an architectural standpoint, they are miniature showcases of various styles, forms and influences. They, in fact, tell the story of architecture.

The Cementerio Católico de la Loma, Cementerio Municipal de Manila (Manila North Cemetery) and the Chinese Cemetery in Manila boast the best examples of funerary architecture in the Philippines. Established during the dying years of the 19th century, they have what are probably the best and richest mausoleums money can buy.

Walking through these hallowed grounds, one passes by interpretations of Egyptian mortuary temples complete with palm-shaped columns and hollow gaped doorways on which are etched a solar disc with spread wings—the Egyptian symbol of protection. There, too, are pyramids guarded by sphinxes, as well as Greek- and Roman-inspired temples with Doric, Ionic or Corinthian accolades.

Other styles are represented as well. Romanesque-type churches with their barrel vaults, Gothic interpretations with their characteristic pointed arches; Art Nouveau mausoleums with their flowing sinuous lines; Art Deco mausoleums with their jazz-like edges; Modern International style mortuaries with their simple plain white walls, and the ever

DETAIL on Mausoleo de Familia Cuesta

TOMB of Pancho Villa

IN THE SHADOW C2

"OLD Door"

"WINDMILLS of La Mancha"

Photography with soul

By Constantine C. Tejero

PALAB TEJADA IS ONE OF THE most sought-after wedding photographers in the country, but she proves herself to be just as adept with other subjects.

Landscape and architecture, particularly, are the noble themes of her exhibit of 12 black-and-white pieces, "Recuerdos de España," until Oct. 20 at Cubo Avenue, Lv'S, Greenbelt 3, ayala Center, Makati City.

The show announces itself as a peek into some corners of Spain, which may shed light on the culture and terrain of that ancient land. And we sure have lots of postcard-pretty images of the windmills of La Mancha, a house on a promontory in Cuenca, the church of Santiago de Compostela, the Illunia lighthouse, a boat.

A few pieces are not identifiably Iberian, such as those images of countries, shore and sea, which can be any nook and cranny on the planet. But there are remarkable compositions just the same, particularly the piece with clutches of seeds and another with white picket fences on a white beach.

Tejada's painterly composition is characterized by clean lines, defined shapes, patterns alternating with empty spaces, the especially thrives on chiaroscuro, of solid shadows and blinding light.

"OLD Man"

More than being well-crafted, however, these pieces suggest a human touch. One senses that a keen and sympathetic human eye and not a cold machine directs the focus to the subject.

Take, for instance, that picture-perfect image of an ancient architectural facade in Cuenca with a man walking by. The human figure is easily dwarfed by the stone structure and might likely be ignored, until one looks closer and sees that the man has an artificial leg. He is a cripple, in fact.

There then are the architectures that tells the photographer documents but granted like the keys of the women; the interspaces with them. In these telltale details, one can distinguish the artist from the garden-variety photographer.

Tejada started in 1997 but became a professional photographer only two years ago. Shooting with both film and digital cameras, she shows a fondness for black-and-white and infrared photography.

"I'm from the School of Hard Knocks," laughs Tejada.

She taught herself the craft by just observing other photographers at work, reading a lot of photography books and magazines, studying theories of light today, composition. And as to when

"LONELY Boat"

"OLD Castle"

Making waves with capiz, clarinet and candles

MARGIE Lim's "Fiesta sa Sta. Niño"

ITTO Estrada's "Abyssal Fire"

By Geo Dominado
Contributor

AN ARTIST WHO CAME TO HIS ART by way of interior design, Jacqueline Tarzuela has been working for successive now on canvases of unusually large sizes for hotel lobbies, residences, resorts.

Tarzuela, 40, a business management graduate, has particularly explored the uses of capiz, a deep sea shell of pearly white color, which for sure as a painting accessory. Tarzuela has incorporated it in his work, not simply as a decorative element, but something decidedly integral and truly ingenious to the scheme of things.

Where a his favored subject, as it is de rigueur to the artist that both medium and image are wedded together, with capiz as the focal point of it all. Having taken the shimmer route, he paints of water as both tranquilized vibrant, a precious resource and an auspicious long-shot symbol.

A commissioned work for the Pueblo Maui Hotel, soon to be renamed Sofitel, are large oils on pieces titled "Abyssal Fire," measuring 47 ½" x 181," set to become the hotel lobby's main attractions. Those large, formidable-looking works radiate a kaleidoscope of colors, inspired by the depths of the oceans.

Executed with capiz of varied shapes, and small seashells splattered across the pictorial field, these works must have caught the eye of the Japanese hotel-owner as he decided to offer Tarzuela a solo show in January next year to coincide with the hotel's reopening.

Artist-musician

An artist with a classical soul, Patricia Robles has been a student of clarinet for three years now, under Prof. Ma. Asa of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. But she's also devoted to the visual arts since her babes in lime thirties.

Her chosen medium is pastel, for its fluidity and ease in handling. Those dozens of drawings in duo mediums comprise the show "Cambalite Exploration: When Music and Art Collide" at the Heritage Gallery.

The show is ample proof that music (or, indeed, be an engrossing journey inside one. The synesthetic, musical notations, various orchestral instruments—all these are translated into a palpable fusion of shapes, textures, colors.

What makes the work so charming is the free-spirited nature of the images. Ostensibly no visual genres bound her, and she clearly yields only to the creative forces. These works have a disarming quality that by turns are soothing, hypnotic, mesmerizing. In time, the young artist would find solid footing.

New watercolor artist

Someone who is into business and management may find it hard to turn to art if the is past middle age and is entirely self-taught. But Margie Lim happens to be endowed with spouse by choice, an exuberant sense of composition, and competence in the delicate water-based medium.

Her pieces mostly tell life and has emerged on the Top 5 of the Today as Today contest this year. "A Thousand Wishes," her winning piece, portrays a dreamy, smoke-filled candlelit ceremony that is a triumphant use of watercolor.

E-mail the author at gdominado@yahoo.com

BIATRIZ Robles' "Violin"

MARGIE Lim at work on her Kashmiri subject

ESTRADA'S "Underwater Series" I

ESTRADA'S "Goddess of the Sea"

The cult value of I

By Gary Devilles
Contributor

PHILOSOPHER WALTER BENJAMIN believes works of art are received on different planes, with cost, the secret is on the cult value, and with the other, on the exhibition value of the work.

The history of art is the shift from these two values, as the pendulum on cave walls, hidden Madonnas, and certain statues of gods accessible only to the priests, eventually giving way to portraits or busts here and there, precedent of icons and museums of artifacts.

Accordingly, with the various methods of art reproduction, the shift of values transformed the very nature and function of art. Thus, for Benjamin, in today's age of mechanical reproduction, art is revolutionized, much more democratized, becomes accessible to all, even to the toiling mass, considering that to be poor then have been denied of such contact or privilege.

However, the cult value of art does not give up easily. It is one final hit way as well even in the modern world, as photography brought out the fascination for postcards, one intimate yearning for an enigmatic smile, and see you. Found longing for that unfathomable face that supposedly can fascinate a thousand ships.

With model Tejada's exhibit "Mukha" (The Face) at Blanc Art Space (2F Crown Tower, 107 E.R. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati, tel. 7530032, 09285278438), art seems to once again to the kind of carousing and roaming, as some of the faces requisitioned on the canvas remind us of that primordial relationship artist can dwell in selves.

Viewing Tejada's works is like having that uneasy feeling of disenchantment as though we have forgotten our humanity, and as though upon looking in a mirror, we fail to see the person, submitting the reflection for the real.

Such claims have not in the real power that

"BONDYING"

animate Tejada's works.

Sharp images

Tejada's creative an interes of who and what we are, as a sharp acuity of a woman is a sting Lydia," the mournful of "Bonding," the awkward and nature of "Dances," and a look of "Elias." These representations stance are actually c conditions of dehumanizi mess.

For Tejada, the faces of and the familiar characters actually vestiges of person make us more human but ra dance with modernity rend lost, shadowy and indistinct ed' interactions about traps a connect us. Our paradoxical fa

Michael Cacnio sculptures at Art Exchange

"ART EXCHANGE" IS A rare exhibition of collaborative works in celebration of Michael Cacnio's 15 years as a sculptor.

Sharing their artistry are some of the country's art greats and emergent talents: Gabby Barredo, Elmer Borlongan, Angel Cacnio, Annett Dans, Reynaldo Galicano, Emmanuel Garibay, Khadi Jimenkhad, Leo Gamboa, Noelle Mamerto-yee, Ramon Orlina, Benjie Reyes, Hadley del Rosario, Ben Tarlengher and Andrea Young.

Also featured are tribute pieces to the late National Artists Ang Kiukok and J. Elizalde Navarro.

MICHAEL Cacnio with Leo Leon Bo

"Art Exchange" is running at th Art Exchange, 3/L, Shoreline-A, un Ilaw 7.

The exhibit is assisted by Th Artery Manila. Call 7520089.

'In the shadow of thy wings . . .

From page C1

MAUSOLEO de Familia Barreda

MAUSOLEO de Familia Fernandez

MAUSOLEO de Familia Ramos-Laguda

LEMLEMAN grave

Governor General Francis Burton Harrison, the heroes of the Philippine Revolution against Spain; Gregoria de Jesus, wife of Katipunan and muse of the Katipuneros, and the Free Americans nowhere known as the Thomasites and Candlelighters of the land.

Unfortunately, not many people find pleasure in visiting cemeteries. Perhaps it is the presence of a tomb or the sight of rows upon rows of crosses and spelling statues of weeping angels that bring horror to many.

Cemeteries are instead just not only to bury who have gone beyond, but also as the glory days of funerary art and architecture. That alone should be enough reason to see them not just as places of yearly pilgrimages but also as heritage sites that serve as a bridge to the architectures of the past. Art to the end, our mortal remains shall rest in such cemeteries and what better way to celebrate our life but with monuments dedicated to our memory.

A dedication inscribed in a tomb in Cementerio de la Loma describes what I think is our ultimate desire: "In the shadow of thy wings we rest, for to the end we do need to rest, and preferably in his shadow."

The author is an architect and architectural historian. He teaches at the College of Architecture of the University of Sto. Tomas.

...ubiquitous mausoleums done in the Pompeiian style.

Oriental architecture manifests itself in the form of Chinese pagodas with up curved tiled roofs and elaborately crafted mystical dragons, and Hindu-Buddhist temples with pointed, u-shaped domes.

Best materials

Most of these mausoleos are made of the best materials. Blocks of solid white marble or green or black granite are carved and chiseled with statues and motifs or somehow known to replicate Greek or Roman temples. Others are carved with intricate steps to adorn the edges of pinnacles for Gothic spires.

Magnificent sculptures crafted by Lauzon, y Ortiz and Sons—featuring the early part of the century—dominate the tombs of the wealthy and the famous. Elaborate statues and urnlets or lapida (leaning Ortiz's signature) are found all over the three Manila cemeteries.

But one does not necessarily have to be a wealthy magnate to have a beautiful mausoleum. Most other memorials are more humble in their construction. Made of hollow-cast plaster reinforced by concrete and decorated with allegories of weeping angels, they have as well managed to stand the test of time.

The statuary found particularly in La Loma and Teatro are quite interesting. If one wonders where the art of sculpting has gone, one only has to visit these two cemeteries to find the answer.

The graceful lines of weeping widows, guardian angels crying at the demise of their beloved saints, sorrowful virgins praying to high heavens and stoic-looking maidens protecting the tombs of their beloved are but a few of the images that these statues capture—though one wonders why only women seem to have the right to weep over their dearly departed.

Even the art of the epitah is seen at its best in these cemeteries. Statues carved in the Art Nouveau or Art Deco style are surrounded with bas-relief of angels and garlands of flowers, while a tomb of a small child is decorated with small statues of playing children.

Famous personalities

Of the three cemeteries, it is in the North Cemetery where most of the famous personages in Philippine history are interred. Like the Cementerio de la Recoleta in Buenos Aires where Evita Peron is entombed, Arlington National Cemetery outside Washington D.C. where the tombs of the Kennedys lie; Hollywood Memorial Park in Los Angeles where Rudolph Valentino and Marilyn Monroe are buried—the North Cemetery is the most visited cemetery in the country.

Here lie the mortal remains of celebrities including Pancho Villa, world lightweight champion of the 1920s; Pedro Bercasio; Eugenio Lopez, world-class painter and patriot; Claro M. Recto, orator and nationalist; Elias Lopez and father and son Fernando Poe Jr. and Jr.; the late presidents Manuel A. Roxas, Sergio Osmeña and Ramon Magsaysay; American Governor General Francis Burton Harrison; the heroes of the Philippine Revolution against Spain; Gregoria de Jesus, wife of Katipunan and muse of the Katipuneros, and the Free Americans nowhere known as the Thomasites and Candlelighters of the land.

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The author is an architect and architectural historian. He teaches at the College of Architecture of the University of Sto. Tomas.

"OLD House"

...ontributions, she produces pieces that can ...considerably compare with the best in the art and the profession.

Her photographs are mostly in black-and-white film. Specializing in fine-art portraiture, she has produced over 70 wedding entrails.

She is the photo editor of Digital Photographer magazine. She put up Stella Luces Studio on Padre Faura, Makati City.

These days, photography is her as a job has become routine. "I can shoot, shoot, shoot—it's automatic—and the results are professional looking but can be unsatisfying."

An artist, of course, she is looking for that proverbial human factor. Like any photographer with an aspiration to art, she can stand there with her camera, crouch or crawl while waiting for the right moment—that crucial factor that distinguishes a picture with soul from a soulless photograph.

Rodel Tapaya's works

His works show images of complex emotions

"MIA"

"ELMA"

"THE FOURTH King"

Internet, for instance, only enhances more the gaps in communication as connections eventually become commodities.

Indeed, it's funny that we settle for emoticons to express our feelings when our faces can articulate more powerful emotions. As Pinoy warna, we settle for images in the cave where the real search outside looking in the light. Ian becomes like "The Fourth King" here in Tapaya's collection—lost...man living in exile for a king when the real one resides within.

Tapaya is a finalist in the 2005 Ateneo Art Awards and the 2005 Philippine Art Awards. His extensive studies in New York and Britain, Holland, had made him a much-sought artist.

His works will be featured in a children's book published by Canvas and UST Publishing House, the same group that brought the late Fernando Poche' works to print in "Elias and Ula Trees" and Elmer Borlongan's renaissance in the "Rocking Horse."

Tapaya is off to Singapore for a show at Ta...ratly art.

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Safeguard champions health to fulfill dreams

In 2009, Safeguard and the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists (PAMET) introduced a program to award exceptional young men and women with medical technology scholarships. The scholarship program, known as **"Handog ng Safeguard... Medtechs ng Kinabukasan"**, marks its 17th anniversary this year, as well as a milestone for having supported over 200 underprivileged students across the country in cost.

As part of Safeguard's commitment to championing health to fulfill dreams, 15 more medical technology students will be awarded with the 3-year medical technology scholarships at the Conservatory of The Peninsula Manila at 6 o'clock this evening. Coming on the theme, "A Brand New Day," tonight's ceremony celebrates a bright future for the awardees.

Safeguard congratulates this year's batch of "Handog ng Safeguard... Medtechs ng Kinabukasan" scholars Bryzzing D. Dillo, Vivanna G. Montebravoso and Darryll M. Salleza of the University of San Agustin, Iloilo City; John Patrick V. de Guzman and Anna Angelica D.R. Nuge of Centro Escolar University, Manila; Jedee Marie B. Policarpio of Manila Central University, Caloocan City; Jelli Ann D. Dave of San Pedro College, Davao City; Paula Angelica Z. Gargantiel and Rolina P. Cesar of Riverside College, Bacolod City; Bhette Grace E. Bonalacio of the University of Baguio, Rose G. Parado of the University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos, Bacolod City; Lorwin S. Esteban of Lyceum of Batangas, Mary Christine M. Encharia of Colegio San Agustin, Bacolod City; Ariel M. Martivia of Apo Medical & Educational Center, Legazpi City; and Marvin A. Bayona of Dipolog Medical Center College Foundation, Dipolog City.

The celebration will also be a platform for the launch of the Safeguard Assisted Reading and Learning (ARAL) Program to benefit over 60 children aged 13 and below. The ARAL Program will build a Safeguard Aral Center, a school building which Safeguard, together with Gawad Kalinga is building in Tanay to provide a venue conducive for education and values formation. The program will also award scholarships to over 60 preschool and elementary students. Together with PAMET, it will also launch a literacy and health supplementary program to develop the interest of the children in science at a very young age.

Throughout its 40-year brand heritage, Safeguard has become recognized as the nation's health partner. The brand's steadfast commitment to improve the lives of Filipinos through health education and service programs is also a reflection of its gratitude to the people for their loyalty and support from day one.

ads 1

PARA SA SAFEGUARD, NAKAKA-KONSENSYA KUNG PANGARAP NILA AY 'DI MATUTUPAD

First row: Bryzzing D. Dillo, Vivanna G. Montebravoso, Darryll M. Salleza, John Patrick V. de Guzman, Anna Angelica D.R. Nuge, Jedee Marie B. Policarpio, Jelli Ann D. Dave, Paula Angelica Z. Gargantiel, Rolina P. Cesar, Bhette Grace E. Bonalacio

Kaya di kami nagdalawang-isip na itaguyod ang pangarap ng mga mahuhusay at kanapat-dapat na Medtech students.
Tulad ng 15 recipients ng 17th Handog ng Safeguard Medtechs ng Kinabukasan Scholarship Program.

Safeguard

2006 PAMET Partner

ENDORSED DILG-NSP PROGRAM

LIFESTYLE

HER YOUTH (pictured to the undoing of Marie Antoinette (Kirsten Dunst).

FROM BOOK TO MOVIE

Queen of cake rehabilitated

By Elvira Paul A. Parado
Contributor

Antonia Fraser gives a kinder view of Marie Antoinette, and Sofia Coppola's film completes the renovation

LEAVE IT TO DIRECTOR SOFIA Coppola to transform a revisionist view of Marie Antoinette, the last queen of France, into a modern film that is at once hip and historically sound.

In her third feature, "Marie Antoinette" (Columbia Pictures, 2006), Coppola takes materials from the biography by Lady Antonia Fraser and proceeds to visualize the apparently misunderstood royal in candy colors and bubbly portrayals.

Pity not? The book and the film trace the life of Marie Antoinette from the time she is sent from her native Austria to France in marriage to the French emperor Louis Auguste, the future Louis XVI, to the couple's travel to Paris after they are confirmed as Versailles by the hungry French mob—all of which happened when Marie Antoinette was 14-17 years of age, the time when a woman has first blossomed and just started pursuing her sensibilities.

While in the last decade history books portrayed Marie Antoinette as an extravagant queen indifferent to the plight of poor France, recent accounts, Fraser's foremost, tell a different story. On the one side, Marie's famous statement to the mob, "Let them eat cake," has been exposed as a hoax and just the product of bad press. And if it did, it was, at the least, explainable by the queen's own exuberant if unknowing youth.

And she was hardly to blame for it, too. France's characterization shows the queen as an Austrian outcast in an ultra-strict French court, riddled with etiquette and strange governing her every movement from the moment she opens her eyes. Today a girl her age would bowl in protest over the lack of freedom. In fact, at that age, a rebellious nature is more than expected; it is almost natural.

The youngest growing-up queen finds these related on their day today. That is an enlightening thought and at the same time mollifying, given the somber animosity usually attached to the era.

Capturing the queen's flippant but trapped nature for the screen is Kirsten Dunst, who worked with Coppola in the latter's much-acclaimed first feature, "The Virgin Suicides," another adaptation.

Dunst gives the libertine touch perfectly with her youthful looks...bright blue eyes, penetrating, a pale complexion, her face framed by bouncing blonde curls (although, in the movie, they give way to the heavy crimson hairstyle of the Versailles court). Her acting is nothing to scoff at, either. Effortlessly she personifies the conflict of responsibility and leisure in a young ruler's mind.

Jamie Dornan's portrayal of "Posthumus" lame plays Marie Antoinette's husband, the equally young and reluctant ruler. He brings to life Louis' shy and unreformed personality, one that causes the miscommunication of the marriage for an astounding seven years. That raises questions over said adult presence on Marie Antoinette's capability to produce an heir. Louis' obtuse way of dealing with his wife might have led to the latter finding love or, more, sexual affair with the Swedish Count Fersen.

More woes

The queen's woes did not end there. She had to contend with gossip over her relationships and criticism over her spending, things that did not sit well with the French. As Versailles, the court watched her every move, ceremony of rules that had been laid down by Louis XIII, including her baths, meals, dressing, and first childbirth (there would be no other public viewing of her in labor, as she would thereafter private).

"Marie" the movie does not come off with the heavy dramatic artillery, however. Coppola's manner of approach is as flippant as its characters, but without losing the pop-on her developing master by her.

The movie is permeated with candy colors and is bouncy with details consistent with a teenage girl, such as fashion trends, girl talk, chocolate, and flirting. That is complemented

Josie Darang's book of miracles

By Dulce Fenix-Bayley
Contributor

IF THERE'S ANYONE TODAY who speaks, breathes, lives and sleeps on miracles, that's Josephine Clemente Darang.

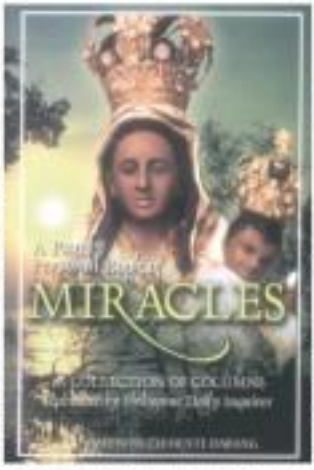
In fact, Josie's life is a miracle, as she's titled "A Family Personal Book of Miracles," the collection of her columns that have faithfully been published by PDI since 1997, is a testimony to that.

For those who want miracles, take it from Josie's experiences as she recounts incidents that transformed her life, from her previous reputation as a "Basher Bank" and "sinful woman" to what she is today, a daily Mass goer and promoter of novenas, she takes faith hence a "family personal" point of view, but going public with her testimonials of the spirit.

As the woman from Ilocos Norte explains in the Introduction: "It was not easy to come to this phase of my life. I had to go through a lot of suffering, so I could testify to the miracle that happened to me. For five years from 1981 to 1985, I suffered from acrolaxa, which was the swelling of the muscles of the esophagus blocking the mouth of the stomach. I dehydrated so food and water would be vomited, vomiting some."

Finally I was operated on April 23, 1985, by Dr. William Ohlle at the ENT Hospital. The following morning, I was able to imbibe water for the first time without vomiting it. My brother Joe told me later that my Lola Lita prayed to Apo Baket—Our Lady of Manaoag."

Two years later, thanks to then lifestyle editor of the BALITA, Lita Logarta, who wrote the words



"Family Personal" on top of Josie's article titled "The Miracle of Our Lady of Manaoag in my life," her column began. It was a column like no other.

As her former editor points out in the preface: "A most sensitive lover is that Josie's column remains. It's received circulation of PDI, as one anniversary issue of the newspaper acknowledged. A marketing survey even pressed more and more people were reading it. But when pre—and gets—more and more other more famous columnists of the same newspaper (at that time, an average of 200 letters per week from them) it's still well-deserved, indeed, was the Catholic Author's bread given her

PURELY Personal columnist Josephine Darang signs copies of her book for fans and well-wishers.

by 1994 by the late Jaime Cardinal Sin."

Many miracles

Leafing through the 266 pages of Josie's book, published by Isread Publishing Corp. and printed by Imprenta de San José, one is overwhelmed by the many "miraculous" words attributed to the Blessed Virgin and her appellations, the saints, and the Sto. Niño.

When asked about the basis for her choice of columns, which one number in the hundreds, she explained she first wrote either for the August 15 or 16 days, and filled in her columns into Testimonials of Miracles, Sacrifices and Celebrations, Churches and Shrines, The Clergy, Intensifying the Faith, Devotions, Pastors, Pilgrimages Abroad, Local Pilgrimages, Thanksgivings, Religious Orders and Religious Organizations, arranged in this manner, it is hoped the book's readers won't end up confused with too many names and novenas.

The articles are written in language that's simple, replete with names, places, basic historical data on the events and projects.

A unique feature of the book are the numerous requests from priests, seminarians and church supporters from provinces for help in finishing the construction of buildings and schools. There are many appeals for medicines as well. Most of the time, these prayer requests, according to Josie, are answered, miracles in themselves.

And due to the many answered prayers received through "Family Personal," Josie Darang may be considered one of the biggest and most effective fundraisers in the country today. She has helped build hundreds of churches throughout the country, a record for a single individual.

And she is not even a millionaire, according to her. Like her saints, though, Josie says she will bless and accept whatever appreciation is attributed to her.

Because of her appeal for financial help to readers of PDI (which, by the way, are given directly to those in need and never counted through her), she has become one of the most sought-after columnists when it comes to house and various church events. As a result, the popular figure of Josie Darang employs, thereby walking in the middle of church aisles during money rolling, three occasions in many areas of a night to behold.

As one of her favorite priests, Fr. Virgilio James Mendoza of General Trias, Cavite, says: "When it comes to church activities, when Josie wants to sing, she will sing, and she gets many with it. And she also always manages to get a spouse for the occasion."

"Conversion can happen anytime," says Josie. "It is never too late. That is God's message, which I try to convey in my columns."

Thanks to this book compilation of her columns, one can now find out how the prayerful and compassionate Josephine Clemente Darang finds her own "miracles" in daily life.

Available at National Book Store

Recommended reads

HERE ARE POWER-Books' recommended reads for the month.

Celebrity chef Vince Dilquina inspires through the taste of meals in 30 minutes cookbook with "Vince's Five Minute Flavor: Fabulous Meals with 5 Ingredients in 5 Minutes."

Best-selling cookbook author and host Rebecca sue Fischer has easy cooks up another heaping of comfort, hearty-free recipes that are ready to shake your bellybuds in less than 30 minutes in "30 Minute Get Real Meals: Eat healthy without losing time (reviews)."

Make your Asian household pining through the hassle of looking for hard-to-find ingredients, in "Everyday Asian." Marnie Hennessy shares a set of her favorite Asian dishes with home cooks.

From the best-selling and 13th rank acclaimed author of "Planning with Scissors" and "Spy comes "Magical Thinking," a collection of true stories that journeys Augusten Burroughs' past into an area of our top memory and memories.

"Journal" by Kiel Atkinson tells of the tale of a tantalizing diary of a troubled young wife and mother made up of conversations, clippings from newspaper accounts and remnants of the 18th century novel.

Tim LaHaye's "The Edge of Darkness" has been filmmaking strip searching for the Last Seniors of Chaos and the dark secrets of the strange good once worshipped by the ancient (Antichrist).

Jeffrey Deaver will chill your spine with "Cold Moon," a story of two people brutally murdered and their whole society marked by serial, multi-ingratiating rapists.

Power Books Specialty Store is a complete one-stop bookstore with branches at Greenbelt 4 (721-6128 201, Megamall (632-638-88), Alabang Town Center (850-8867-101, Shoemart (632-631-1001), Shangri-La Plaza (631-6041), Robinsons Place Manila (521-0554), and Mall of Asia (832-0202).

Young Filipina discovers the world behind the wall

WHAT WAS LIFE REALLY LIKE INSIDE the Berlin Wall? A young Asian woman travels to the former East Germany to uncover her ancestors in the name of romance, bringing with her an inquiring and open mind. In a series of essays and letters to her family, a unique world comes to life. The University of the Philippines Press proudly announces one of its latest releases, "From Inside the Berlin Wall" by Helen F. Yap.

The book presents impressions and insights into a culture depicted by the author as sometimes hostile, sometimes welcoming. Yap's observations are like anywhere else. People walking their dogs, young people holding hands," she writes in one letter to another she expresses bafflement over the Pinoy penchant for crossing streets unmindful of oncoming traffic, while in this land of socialistic perfection, everyone waits patiently for the light to change. In a voice sometimes breathless with awe, sometimes dispel with longing for the family she left behind, Yap engages the reader in her personal encounters and reflections on, among other things, how communist faith is socialism ("the kind of socialism without discrimination"), as well as her new understanding and appreciation for her own culture and identity.

Another thing that makes this an unusual book is its author. Helen Trinidad Yap, is currently a professor of Martin Luther, a GDP professor and graduate of the Wilhelm-Pieck University in Rostock, the German Democratic Republic. She served as two-time chair of Georgia Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection), an advisory group to the United Nations system, and, in 1995, was a recipient of TOWNS (The Outstanding Women in the Nation's Service).

"From Inside the Berlin Wall" is available at Ayala Books in Greenbelt, Popular Bookstore in C. Morato, Solidaridad, Powerbooks, Fullybooked, Book Sale, Booxx Bookshop, Fully Booked, and at the UP Press bookstores in UP Diliman, Baguio, Iloilo and Davao.

IN THE FILM, Marie Antoinette's rumored affair with a Swedish count is also revisited.

Queen of cake rehabilitated

From page B1

by a lively soundtrack of '80s pop music such as, well, how 'about Bow's "Ghost Circle."

But all that aside, Coppola's movie moves around as Marie Antoinette grows up and becomes a mother. The colors are dulled and take on the hues of an old photograph. The character is less frivolous and more lady-like, then up to the end when she has to face the rich. Sweet's Marie Antoinette is a grown and more intelligent woman, but still with a touch of silliness.

Much like her first two features ("The Virgin Suicides" and "Lost in Translation"), Coppola's take on "Marie Antoinette" lavish beauty on the conveyance of mood. There are no really stunning visuals, but the movie lets the viewers feel the period's contrasts in a given moment, be it the frigid exposure, fears or comfort but at the same time a suffocating sick, exuberant that manifests itself later when the characters forsake them.

This new film is the first real effort to tell the royal couple's side to a stunning audience that otherwise would be content with what was contained in their books for European History class.

The film is being overlooked, the movie's numerical hints on Fraser's painstaking research. Throughout the years, Fraser has established herself as a veritable profiler of historical figures. Her other works are "Mary Queen of Scots" (winner of the James Tait Black Memorial Prize), "Cromwell: Our Chief of Men", "The Six Wives of Henry VIII", and "The Gunpowder Plot: Terror and Faith in 1605" (which won the St. Louis Literary Award and CWA Non-fiction Gold Dagger).

Because of Fraser's empathy and Coppola's fresh approach, allegations and doubts regarding Marie Antoinette's story may finally be settled. If not, it's still a significant try in erasing once-tarnished "in History's name."

Acclaimed 'Trainspotting' author

ACCLAIMED CONTEMPORARY SCOTTISH novelist Irvine Welsh was born with his 1993 novel "Trainspotting."

Welsh was born in Leith, Edinburg, on Sept. 26, 1956. He spends are set there, but not the rustic Edinburgh of Princes Street and the Royal Mile (what Welsh refers to derisively as "shortbread Disneyland")...but the geographical and sociophysical outskirts of the capital, the depressed and depressed underside of Leith.

In 1982, Welsh realized he had a drug problem. "It became a lifestyle rather than a recreation. When you start lying and stealing, you cannot control yourself, you're not in control anymore."

This experience became one of the inspirations for his most successful book, "Trainspotting," set in the mid-1980s, is an edgy comic portrait of a group of young heroin users living in Edinburgh, using a series of loosely connected short stories to tell the story of an interesting bunch of characters. The novel was adapted as a film directed by Danny Boyle, starring Ewan McGregor and Robert Carlyle, in 1996.

Welsh's books are available at Power-Books Specialty Store which has branches at Greenbelt 4 (721-6128 201, Megamall (632-638-88), Alabang Town Center (850-8867-101, Cherries 3 (752-2760), Shangri-La (631-6041), Robinsons Place Manila (521-0554), and Mall of Asia (556-0340).

VISUAL ARTS

Bagtas at Renaissance

After his successful Lumayan exhibit, Aris Bagtas has opened his second solo exhibit, "Katotika," at Renaissance Gallery (43, Magsaysay). A proud son of Asingan, Bagtas depicts in realistic style rural and romantic devotions of Manalo Church to create that capture the town's rustic all-over charm and vibes. Show runs until Nov. 6. Call 632-7181.

'Hanging Out' classes at MegaNet

MegaNet Café (Ballyshear Avenue, QC, in front of Mapúa College and Ateneo) will host "Hanging Out," a series of informal classes on art, media and social issues. Speakers are Dec Ochoa (TV news writing), Rules Bernardo (drama and screenwriting), Cynthia Ekendahl (songwriting), Lex Ong (filmmaking), Manuel Quezon (painting), and Rick Yuson (creative writing). Classes will start Nov. 6, 4 to 6:30 p.m. Call 929-0139 or 0911-5280191.

ARTIST Inez Nisanep-Vitaza with her butterflies

Nisanep-Vitaza at 828

Inez Nisanep-Vitaza will mount "Illusion II," a show of acrylic-on-canvas works depicting butterflies, Nov. 9-14, at Gallery 828, Shangri-La Plaza, Mandaluyong. The new works show more texture than before, and a deeper sense of movement. Although self-explanatory, her works are spiritually inspired. Call 633-7170.

THE LUNTIANG Ilagan Artist Group Inc. (Lunta), an environmental art group, is holding its 42nd group show, "Aning Sining," at the Gallery of the Social Security System (SSS) in Quezon City. On display are landscapes, seascapes, still lifes and surrealist-genre paintings. Photo shows SSS president Corazon de la Paz (second from left) receiving a painting donation from Solano Cruz (third from left). Also in photo are Lunta president Charlito de Nava and guest of honor Sen. Alfredo Lim. Exhibit runs until tomorrow.

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Visual Arts

Kulay Marikina at Artasia

The Doña Marikina group of artists will hold "Sa't Ibang Kulay" at Artasia (#1, SM Megamall) Nov. 1-14. Exhibitors include Rolee Bolisi, Henry Boquiren, Mona Cameron, Ige Encarnacion, Glen Cruz, Eric Cruz, Arabie Florendo, Antonio Fresnoza, Lulu Gabriel, Romy Gorde, Jose Hay, Bencinnante, Noriko Manimtan, George Ng, Andy Pernia, Noel Rito, Florlord Santos, Sheila Sangco, Homer Tovio, Andy Unap, Tam Vivas, Lisa Villanueva and Lydia Perdevara. Log on to www.artasiafineart.com.

Ngeo ng Sining' at Y

Galerie Y presents Ben Gulot artists in "Ngeo ng Sining," until Nov. 7 at the Art Center, A1, Bldg. 4, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong. The theme of the exhibit is "Sanaysay Pandalas." The show features the works of Jovan Ignacio, Arnold Limasco Cano, Abadio Antiquerio, Angelito Bolisoni, Felipe Maroya, Aron Piscoquin, Tito Sanchez and Janice Young. Call 6324761.

JOVEN Ignacio

"MORNING Sky Drawing Fire," by Sol Devina

Devina at Avellana

Sol Devina at Avellana Art Gallery is Sol Devina's "Works from Down Under." Devina is an artists' portraits, the painter blends living attention accessories that seem achingly real in her: a balancing with shoes for a head, a figure of a man with animals wings, two people being fed and cared by any services body a Pedal lady. Stripped of any understatement of irony, the works have a throwback that is somehow big. The artist belongs as a new maker of self-fantasy with the other half in establishing color. Avellana's located at A-19, 3548 E.B. Herrera St., Pasay City (fronting Osmeña Academy). Call 8338001.

"DOMINION Survival," by Tanay Belleza Torres

Torres at Hiraya

Hiraya Gallery's 5/F, United Nations Ave., Ermita, Manila) presents an exhibit by "Wong Hechelu Torres-dubbed "Biomotion" until Oct. 31. Talongo works in watercolor display a panorama of the subliminal ground-the unseen over life and death without the dread and darkness of ghoulic terror. The exhibit also highlights the artist's talent in figurative drawings. Call 5210331 or 5210001.

Saavedra at Art Informel

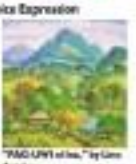
Carlo Angelo Saavedra presents "Circuporte," until Nov. 8 at Art Informel (777 Connecticut St., Greenhills East, Mandaluyong City). The exhibit features mixed series of oil on canvas, paintings of various subjects executed in highly expressionist brushwork. Call 7705516.

"CHILD at Play," by Cahay Esteban

"RED Tree," by Boots Comosar

'Obra' at Choice Expression

"Obra," an exhibit by the Philippine Art Group, is on view at Choice Expression Gallery (Bella Complex, 1st Floor, Jupiter St., Bel-Air, Makati). Participating artists are Ben Reyes, Cahay Esteban, Abet Catacutan, Nilo Cruz, Sunny Santiago, Lino Sicam, Dodi Echevarri, Jimmy Hwang, Fred Ramirez, Olivier Ortiz-Lobregat and Antonio Bautista. The show runs until Nov. 17. Call 8181188.



"PAG-UPO at Ina," by Lino Arzaga

VISUAL ARTS D3

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LIFESTYLE

Monique, Menchu and the sound of Maria

Two of the country's finest theater actresses are taking turns playing Maria Von Trapp in Bep's revival of 'The Sound of Music'

By Ghits Cadiz

MENCHU LAUCHENGCO-Yulo was 17 and Monique Wilson was 10 when they first appeared together in Repertory Philippines' 1980 production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "The Sound of Music."

That production takes on a near-legendary sheen when you consider the star wattage that went into it. Playing Maria Von Trapp, the role made world-famous by Julie Andrews in the film of the same name, was Baby Barredo. Claire Ponce Enrile was Captain Von Trapp. Irma Potenciano was the Mother Abbess. Baroness Schraeder was Celia Diaz-Laurel.

Joelle Groves played Rolf; Freddie Santos was Max Detweiler (the impresario who got the Von Trapp family singing in public), and the ensemble included Roselyn Perez, Terry Wilson, Ilsa-chang Agudo Ramos and Fred Forbes.

Aside from Lauchengco-Yulo and Wilson, the Captain's seven children included Raymund Lauchengco (then 14), Leo Salcedo (9), Blue Hontiveros (also 14, now the feisty party-list congresswoman), Jamie Arriaga and Angela Adams.

"We had 13-18 performances at the Meralco Theater," Lauchengco-Yulo recalls. "We had no lapel mikes so, the orders were hanging from the ceiling, and we were singing with a full orchestra! So we had to belt our heads off, and Tita Abbot (Amadeo, the late founding artistic director of Rep) would scream at us, 'I cannot hear you!'"

The kids also made the rounds of TV stations to promote the show. They performed on the variety program "Student Canteen" (which just a bit about the sea change that has engulfed pop culture, singing an English dance group appearing on "Eat Bulaga!" or "Wowowee" today) and on the late-afternoon show "Discotime," among others.

Full circle

Seventeen years later, Wilson and Lauchengco-Yulo are about to come full circle by alternating in the role of Maria in Bep's revival of "The Sound of Music," set to run Nov. 11-Dec. 17 in Bep's Globe Theater at Ortigas, Circuit[wh?].

Lind, the part played by Lauchengco-Yulo in the 1980 show, will now be played by three young actresses, one of them Lauchengco-Yulo's own daughter.

Sonsoro, meet Rolf, a new Captain Von Trapp, alternating with Michael Williams, while Abigail Hontiveros and Bunggoy Moreno take turns as Max.

In a further case of generational symmetry, the role of Sister Margarita, the eldest nun, will be [illegible]

MONIQUE Wilson (left) and Menchu Lauchengco-Yulo (second from right) with other cast members of "The Sound of Music": (seated) Nadia Ocampo and Michael Williams; (standing) Pinky Marquez, Camille Lopez, Chris Gil and Nina Reyes

THE 1980 CAST of "The Sound of Music"—Claire Ponce Enrile as Captain Von Trapp, Baby Barredo as Maria, with (from left) Angela Adams, Leo Salcedo, Ilsa Hontiveros, Jamie Arriaga, Raymund Lauchengco, Monique Wilson and Menchu Lauchengco

They feel the body electric

Monique Wilson, Pinky Amador and Juno Henares star in the New Voice Company's production of Eve Ensler's 'The Good Body'

By Jerome Gomez
Contributor

MONIQUE WILSON WILL PASS OUT BE-cause and will have the joints jutting out at least her waistline's touch or fade on Waldyd Street curtsidies.

But are on the subject of her body her breasts in particular. Many years back, she recalls, after her "Miss Saigon" stint, she was offered by Vhe Ohno big boss Vic del Rosario the lead role in the remake of Ang Pinakamagaling Huwag sa Balot ng Lo-po." In the original movie, the most memorable scene was that of a nubile Gloria Diaz sliding a loose evening only a Ilony Arroyo.

"How can I do that?" Monique asked then. "They didn't realize I was thin chested. Sabi nila, 'They'll just put balloons na lang in your costume.' Ha! That's an idea! Ohno degrading is that to be at Annabelle's Restaurant and everyone's talking about your lack of breasts!"

The 38-year-old theater actress, still adamant on her flatness, is gamely taking out her personal body issues for her Gerry Salonga Company's latest project, "The Good Body." Eve Ensler's extra collection of monologues about women's tortured relationships with weight, body image and self-acceptance.

While reviews were unanimous in saying that Ensler pieces is not as memorable as her wildly popular and ground-breaking "Vagina Monologues," "The Good Body" was nevertheless met with praises when it opened on Broadway two years ago.

The New York Times called it "forthright, funny, bristling with attitude and tastefully harvested snippets of wisdom." The critics were in agreement, too, that, like "Vagina," this one was uplifting, inspirational and empowering to women.

(L/R) Henares, Pinky Amador and Monique Wilson in New Voice Company's "The Good Body," written by Eve Ensler and directed by Rica Bella

Tita version

The play was originally a one-woman show with Ensler portraying the various characters, famous and obscure, from Iran-Iraq throws to an African-American girl in a tin camp, in a minimalist stage set unlike that of "Vagina." Monique is poetic nonsense that the New Tuvel parlor manicure at the Manic Manners will be the model premiere of the "tita version," as confined by Ensler to accommodate two cuts in actresses.

Monique will be joined by Pinky Amador (who plays Shalee) and Juno Henares, whose she both cute at Repertory Philippines back in the days of "I, Dorian Line." Pinky played Judy and Juno white-tights as Judy's boyfriend Julio. Monique played Maggie and had to stuff her flat chest with socks. Juno was Cassie, who was then, to see her own words, "just perfect."

"It was point, we all have issues with our body, fatso' we admire many females in, empowered to, not are connected to body a certain way," says Monique, who, these days, is Pinky's gym buddy, and is allowing herself to eat carbs to supply her with energy for her next role—Aleta in Rep's upcoming "The Sound of Music."

Five characters

For "The Good Body," Monique is tasked to do five characters, among them a model who nobody hangs eating sweets to she can continue to hold the attention of the planet and poor she married, a woman who undergoes vaginoplasty as a birthday gift to her husband, and cosmopolitan editor Brown, who at 50 is still addicted to dating in age and has barely recovered from what her mom told her at a kid. (but she still cannot be anymore to her sister.

The last one resonates quite profoundly with Monique, who, although privileged to have grown up with "cool parents" who nurtured her with positive body image, had an aunt who used to tell her she didn't look as good as her siblings.

"She would tell me, 'Don't worry, you're an ugly duckling now but, when you grow up, you'll be a swan,' and then when I grew up, people would say, 'Hey, that's no swan, that's a duck!'" she laughs as if yung nakaraan na.

The aunt's words thankfully did not leave a brake or scars as those on the women she plays in "The Good Body." The pressure she eventually succumbed to her career as an actress she sees wealth with good humor: people constantly telling her to lose weight. Busy time at the airport who would point her boobs and chided, "Mataba ka pero ang sexy mo!"

Like the women in the play Monique is finally putting all her body issues on the table.

"Even when I was younger, Tita Ellen (Gonzales Amador, her mentor at Repertory) would always ask me to play down the actress-sexy older characters, so I was already wearing padded bras onstage at the age of 13."

In her most famous stage role, that of Gus in "Miss Saigon," she even padded bras to play the 17-year-old Vietnamese prostitute. It was grotesque, she admittedly fell flat on her chest, which alarmed her audience. Monique, however, didn't feel a thing.

"I've survived all that without doing anything, so why do it now?" she says, when asked if she would ever consider breast augmentation for the benefit of the boardwalk of the available Bela procedures.

"What I've always known, as an artist is that I'm fit for some roles and for some I'm not. On that account, I have a lot of self-acceptance."

At 38 or so, a stolid looking dossier of manage and passion fruit perfects hands on the corner of the table.

"Oh my GOD," Monique gasps and looks away.

Monique, Menchu and the sound of Maria

From page F1

reprised by Joy Virata, who played the part in 1980.

The Mother Abbess' operatic pipes, meanwhile, will be provided by Camille Lopez and Pinky Marquez. The title of the famous Rodgers & Hart song comes right to former movie actress Nina Bayer, a Rep alumna herself, and an ante nights to Charlie Gil.

"Ian's [Jamie Jabalones]" assistant Wilma, "She's just perfect! She just works in all to glamorous and regal, and proving that she's so cheeky, so! Ian doesn't to set anymore, she really intimidates us!"

While to quite surprising to hear from this actress, who, at 36, has become one of the country's undisputed pillars of the stage. Wilson's measure of courage and offstage accomplishments here and abroad are daunting: simultaneous with "The Sound of Music," she's also doing Eve Ensler's "The Good Body" for New Voice Company (for story above). One attributes much of that drive and her success to Rep's intensive training.

"I remember that, in our 1980 show, we didn't had to sing a difficult version of 'The Sound of Music'—the a cappella version with the three-part harmony," she recalls.

"All it took was for Tita Ellen to scream, 'I'm gonna fire all of you tonight!' and we learned it. We went to Repet's Studio for our practice and we were all crying because she said we were all going to be fired! Menchu, who was our sis then, brought us to the corner and told us, 'The more to practice, we have to practice! That night, during rehearsals, we were so nervous, but we got it! It was only later on I realized, nag practical na siya e, di na siya tayo pinaiyak!"

Call it tough love, especially for kids barely out of their puberty, but both Wilson and Lauchengco-Yulo look back with fondness to Amador and Saavedra's uncompromising standards in the crucible that molded them to excel as artists and individuals.

"Above and more, we're realizing as we get older that all those hard years when we were kids and they were so hard on us, it's really what prepared us for what we're doing now. Tita Ellen and Tita Baby didn't entrust to become we were kids. She treated us like adults, and in any case to date. We got the best out of them and their examples," I mean, Tita Baby had breakfasts during the opening of 'The Sound of Music,' but she finished the show! That was how it was," says Lauchengco-Yulo, at 42 the country's leading musical-theater actress.

Different version

Hmmdo, who played Maria twice (in the 1977 and 1980 seasons), a directing this new production based not on the movie but on the original Broadway musical which starred Mary Martin. However, some changes incorporated into the film version by Ernest Lehman and Rebecca Guber have been added, including the songs "I Have Confidence" and "Something Good," which were not in the original version.

Wilson and Lauchengco-Yulo agree that playing the same character doesn't mean sticking up to carbon copies of each other.

"For sure you will see two different interpretations, because we're two different performers. But, of course, the similarities will be there, too, because it's the same character and we don't deviate too much from that," says Lauchengco-Yulo.

"What you will see," says Wilson, "is her indomitable spirit. I just read her biography and she's really amazing. She had so much positive energy and she was the one who straightened and kept that family intact. That's what we would like to capture—how she was such a unique individual."

Or, as Lauchengco-Yulo puts it, "she was a non-nuffi lady."

On top of the challenge of playing an iconic character like Maria, there two actresses also relish the chance to narrate and perform onstage with (as of last count) 21 children who make up three sets of the Captain's kids, whom they will have to shepherd in 40 performances.

Finally, this "Sound of Music" is also a long dreamed of occasion for Wilson, Lauchengco-Yulo and their Rep peers.

"This is really our lunch—Michael, Bobbit, Monique, plus the living legends Raimo, Freddie Santos...Jessie Santiago, Jaime Fabregas, Pinky Amador, Cecile Laurel, Bart Guingona, Jaime del Mundo, and Lou, except Lou left early when she went to the movies," says Lauchengco-Yulo.

"Every year, we've been looking for a production where all of us can work together. So, for the four of us—Menchu, me, Andie and Michael—doing 'The Sound of Music' is a dream come true," says Wilson.

Rep's "The Sound of Music" runs Nov. 11-Dec. 27 at Onstage Theater, Greenhills C. Tel: 887-9333/891-9999.

E-mail the author at gcolin@inquirer.com.ph, visit www.philmusicals.com

Raises play wins Aliw

National debut for Librarians Dr. Alejandro F. Nolasco and executive director Cecile Guidote Alvarez of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts are congratulated by Presidential Management Group for winning the Aliw Awards' best musical and best direction for Rosas' modern-day musical, "Dreamboy in Cemetery." The musical also was hailed and hooted to perform in New York City at La Mama Theater by the 2007 Broadway Inspirasyon Silver Edmund to June 2007 in time for Philippine Independence Day. Rosas are also librarians from Buffalo, Los Angeles and Hawaii. The play is now an adaptation of Nicanor G. Tiongco's Philippine Center for International Theater Institute/Tanghalang Pilipino (TIC/TP) ensemble and the UST Conservatory of Music.

Indie films conquer Mindanao

By Christine Godinez-Ortega
Contributor

IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO dream of a vital Philippine cinema that, ideally, will not know painful compromises for commercial gain.

The Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Outreach Program might not be able to compete with other complex system of distribution, commercial films studios practice, but the CCP and its affiliate sponsors of indies can't go wrong in knocking on the doors of academia.

Unprecedentedly minds with the guidance of three professors might as well be the patriot Poets to change the scene of cyberse movie-going public.

Mindanao students recently showed a high level of awareness of independent films, which included Ryan Reyes's "Baryaks," Albert Alejandro Acharon's "Room Boy," Iskwater de la Cruz's "Sarong Banggi," Limbuhido del Mundo Jr.'s "Pepot Artista" (represented by producer Mike Liu), the short film "Bahoy" by Sigrid Andrea Bernardo and the runaway favorite, Mikhiko Yamamoto's "Ang Pagbabalaga in Maniwa Oliveros," directed by Antonio Saliva.

Students of Mindanao State University System and from other Iligan schools savor a new species of Filipino movies

Students of the Mindanao State University System and other Iligan schools were picky with the lineup of indie films screened 8 a.m.-9 p.m. to expansive venues of the MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology campus Sept. 18-19.

Aside from the well-applauded "Sarong Banggi," students nabbed "Pagdadalaga," the country's entry to this year's Oscars for Best Foreign Language Film. Dandiwin queued in the run before "Pagdadalaga's" screening at the gymnasium.

Beyond the obvious theme of love and care for another, the movie's defamiliarization of life's routines, such as Dandiwin doing household chores, was enough to put one on edge while watching.

"I have to move familiar than necessary rice for cooking? The difference is Maxmine's sudden realization that his habitual pouring of four milk tins of rice into the pot must stop as there is represent the surviving members of a family whose ordinary here had already been chosen.

The denuded sentence, heavy dialogue and meaningless silences in most commercial films were happily absent here.

Complex theme

Bryant's lengthy "Tuesday" dealt with a complex theme anchored on a rikkosha machine. Pedaled a bit pink with the phallic symbol of a microphone in the middle, the contraption changed many lives in a hectic and always awakened in its wonder some scenes appear inane.

Men will be men, and I wondered all along how a male writer and director like Bryant would treat his female characters. Sure enough, Bryant is the exact director to watch with his poetic rendition of colors and his treatments of self-righteous women and of long-suffering wives within the traditional Tagalog culture of machismo and speakeasy society.

The best personal of all, of course, is that of the harris whose briefness and instinctive good sense allowed her to survive a hostile environment. Hopefully, her patron lover who loved me was his anxiety would help her mark for her redemption.

If the teary-filled "Barayka" tackled personal and environmental issues, Adlawan's focused portrayal of a good man and a woman of strength in "Room Boy" was remarkable.

Adjacent to uplifting artist in a movie has a powerful image, disregarding, she hadn't concerns. Yet in "Room Boy," its use as metaphor for male hollow was refreshing.

Melba's puffing on unlighted cigarettes exemplified a modern person's desire to fill his soul readily, contrasting with Lito' literal interpretation of keeping to his word, having been a one-time honored Boy Scout until faced with his own epiphany.

Among the indies, the quest story and the use of movie-within-movie cause no wrong. For instance, Brenan dela "Bahoy" contrasts the image of a kargador with an unpaired doll was train tracks and nude Barbies on the sleeping mat—the master's statements of Vicen from confession for glass.

Figan's film festival, in the end, was a fruitful experience, especially by the very hardworking student-team composed of MSU-IIT College of Arts and Social Sciences student hosts, Joyce Adlawan, Jeorvel Faith Montes, Dennis Boy Zhu, Alvin Tabora, Kha Diamond del Castillo, Diana Sevenque and Rick of Catong.

Among other things, we witnessed the filmmakers' humility in conducting a room-to-room campaign for Mindanao students to support indies, and, with their easy hassle, sending the message that, with a great audience, dreams work.

TAKING in the sea at Opol, Misamis Oriental: Bryan de la Cruz, Sigrid Bernardo, Mike Liu and Kimpton Adlawan

Landmark opera

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

RAISED ONE OF THE UPLIFTING MOMENTS in Manila's music scene after Typhoon "Milenyo" ravaged Metro Manila was the Philippine premiere of Tchaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin."

The opera was all set to open on the day the typhoon struck and you can imagine the cast's collective taboo after the full set minus the media nobody dared go to the CCP Thursday night with a municipality rendered without electricity), they found a city in ruins.

"Onegin" was to start a week later with four performances. (Save evening performances and a Saturday matinee) and the opera was a welcome respite for the typhoon-ravaged metropolis.

On its opening night, the musicians were the Tolentos of Rachelle Emerita, the Onegin of Andrew Fernando, the Olga of Clarissa Ocampo and the Tatyana of Leonard de la Cruz (the latter was not heard by the Saturday gala-night audience who heard Eugene de la Sarosa).

Gavotlas dominated the Thursday and Saturday night performances with a powerful and well-delivered Lenski of Arthur Fernandez. Fernandez' solid voice was worthy of the title role. Clarissa Ocampo turned out in the first act because the song beautifully as she acted with fervor. Veteran soprano Filipponina was engaging in all the four performances.

Leonard's short appearance in the ballroom scene as Triquet was unforgettable. The acting was real and the singing was simply ravishing. I was disappointed not to hear him of the gala night.

Noel Asuncion and Thea Benz had excellent chemistry in a tandem performance; they were both vocally and visually appealing. Benz Ferrer's Lenski was tender and full of emotion. Randy Gilongo didn't have the visual appeal of Ferrer but he shone vocally in the superbly sung Lenski's aria before the duel scene.

Throughout the four performances, the role of the premier leader solidly sung by Jonathan Gee was a big revelation (yes, he was the pianist who played Mozart's C Major Sonata in the Francisco Santiago Hall and conducted Ingrid Gonzaga's Chopin concerto in the same venue).

The stunning set and costume design of Cleo Gonzalez set the mood of the opera and welcomed by the very imaginative lighting of Ellen de la Paz. The ballroom scenes dazzled with the dance numbers staged by Vella Damian's dance company.

Director Floy Quintos allowed the music to dominate the opera and his was a directorial triumph in every telling.

Conductor Herminio Barayo was in good command of the music and the singers and the UST Symphony Orchestra fared up to the challenge of a professional opera accompanist.

At the gala night, former First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos graced the occasion to specially see the Filipino talents who stood out in Onegin.

The landmark production was initiated by the UST Conservatory of Music led by Dean Raul Sunico as part of the highlights of the celebration of the quadricentennial of the University of Santo Tomas.

Musical childhood

What I'd consider the autobiography of the decade is Gilda Cordero Fernando's "The Last Full Moon: Lessons On My Life." From that book, I learned that the family treasured an upright piano in the first family residence along Burgos St. in Quiapo. But Gilda's father played the flute; that one of the family's children was an actor than the poet Emilio Jacinto Fernando's father; that Gilda's childhood at the Manila Metropolitan Theater in the ballet days recital of National Artist Leonor Orosa Goquingco before the place was leveled.

Gilda's evolution as short-story writer, wife, mother, book publisher, theater producer and grandmother is fascinating and full of content.

By the way, Gilda was one of the recipients of the Quezon City Lifetime Achievement Award, along with pianist Cecile Licad and writer-researcher Odilao Alcantara, given by Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte on the occasion of the city's 67th founding anniversary.

Modeling school damaged

One of the most known casualties of "Milenyo" is the Philippine High School for the Arts in Mt. Makiling in Los Baños, Laguna. The school was without water and power for almost a month (the water system was destroyed), the ballet studio was busted by soil erosion, the arts scholars were stranded without water and food, and the roads to the school were rendered impassable.

After the typhoon, the students had to walk five kilometers to get to their rented bus. Even the school bus was damaged.

Dulce, Gonzaga team up

Singer Dulce, whose last appearance with the Philippine Philharmonic ended in a standing ovation, is excited over her first team up with international tenor and fellow Visayan Dimitri Gonzaga Chiles, a two-time grand-prize winner of the Asian Singing Competition in Hong Kong, a feat Cebu artist Gonzaga is from Iloilo.

The Cebuano singer will sing songs from "Cats" ("Memory") and "Sunset Boulevard" ("One Last Look At You").

The two will be heard for the first time in the opening of the Great Performers Series at the Philamlife Theater on Dec. 9 with the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Redel Cabarrubi.

Guest artists include soprano Rachelle Garcellan and Camille Lopez-Molina and flutist Christopher Chiocio, two-time winners of the National Music Competition for Young Artists.

Garcellan, who just came from another triumphant engagement after her widely received Tatyana, will reprise the letter scene from "Eugene Onegin" in the Dec. 9 Philamlife gala concert. For tickets (only remaining last few seats, call 9007022 or cell 0906-3150270.

The UST Conservatory's 'Eugene Onegin' is an uplifting musical moment in a city ravaged by 'Milenyo'

ROMANTIC Former First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos and Noel Asuncion in matinee performance

EUGENE Onegin (Andrew Fernando) and Tatyana (Rachelle Gervolla) in the penultimate scene

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'El Fili' from Gantimpala

GANTIMPALA THEATER FOUNDATION (GTF), in cooperation with the National Book Development Committee (NBDC), presents "El Filibusterismo," a dramatization of José Rizal's second installment to his first novel, "Noli Me Tangere."

GTF's stage presentation is intended for high-school students taking up the subject, and is designed to help them understand the historic of this masterwork by the national hero.

The Actors Company performers are Nestor Cunanan, Dulo dela Paz, Jorge Cabello, Percy Bacaltos, Wery Dizon, Sherjie Bermudez, Lani Taylor, Jojit Lorenzo, Bella Aguado, Billy Nacion, Francis Ong, Lullanie Ann Tejero, Chiqui Xerxe Burgos, Allan Valentin, Julius Edperada, Bong Embido Jr., Abel Napuran, Henry Mervic Galido and Yeoda Sebastian Jr.

Directing it is by Soshi Tapacio, production design by Rexbak Valle and lights design by Andy Villareal. Alice Ilustre is the production manager and Musical Time Ramos the stage manager. Tony S. Napoles is GTF artistic director.

Performances are on these dates and venues: Nov. 3, 6 p.m., Concert at the Park, Open air auditorium, Luneta Park Rizalita; Nov. 10-12 and Nov. 17-19, 9 a.m. and 11 am, AFP Theater, Edsa; Nov. 24-26, 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., SM Southmall, Las Piñas.

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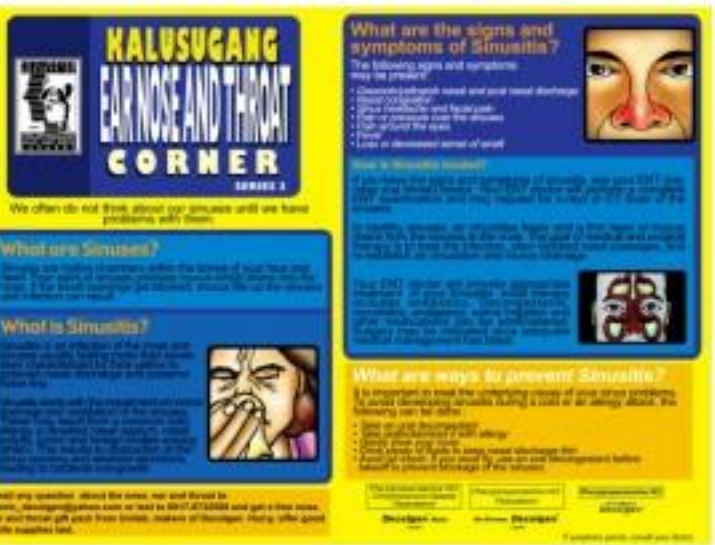

'Prestige' casts a spell

By Eldre Paul A. Peralta
Contributor

AT MAGIC SHOWS, there's always that nagging question whether everything is real or the audience merely hasn't vanished closely. But then, the success of each trick thus has been performed is that the audience does not quite catch on to how it is done.

All hints lead to a dead end. Depending on the package, the illusion can be a source of either amusement, awe, inspiration, or a perplexing fear of power of possibly dark origin.

According to Cutler, the magician's ingenuity came when designing the intricate tricks seen in the movie, played by Michael Caine) in Warner Bros. and Touchstone Pictures' "The Prestige," every genre feat of magic is juxtaposed of their pasts: the Pledge, where the magician shows you the ordinary subject of the trick; the Turn, where he reveals his power on the ordinary thing and does something out of the ordinary; and finally, the Prestige, the magician's resolution, where he must resort to right whatever it was that he accidentally made to go away.

Pledge

In turn-of-the-century London, occupying the upper echelons of culture along with operas and theatrical plays were magicians' shows. The magicians themselves were society icons, seen as they were images of ostensible normalcy and reflection. Against this backdrop, "The Prestige" presents the lives of two men at the heart of the feuds.

Robert Angier (Hugh Jackman) is in it for the applause. "I'm in the look on the people's faces," he says, that drives him to do magic. His latest rival, Alfred Borden (Christian Bale), meanwhile, is a devil-may-care poster but who cannot sell his apparently better talents as effectively as Angier does his run-of-the-mill stunts.

Their rivalry is sparked by the death of Angier's wife, Julia (Piper Perabo), a magician's assistant, after an accident in an act where the two men are likewise involved as stagehands. Much like businessmen out to destroy each other's enterprise, the two magicians proceed to spy on each other and in the process find more and more violent ways of sabotage.

Assisted by the ingenious Cutler (Michael Caine), however, Angier rises to the top of the popularity heap with daily selling, and with the beautiful and equally flashy Olivia Harriet Johansson as his assistant.

That is, until Borden performs the ultimate magic trick.

Obsessed with copying the act and selling it with more flair—and at a profit, too—despite numerous the moment into a bloody battle for recognition as London's greatest ever magician. It is no longer a matter of performance, but revenge, and ultimately, survival before increasingly disjointed rounds as setbacks to each foes.

Turn

Structured like a three-part magic performance, the movie

HUGH Jackman as Robert Angier

CHRISTIAN Bale as Alfred Borden

MICHAEL Caine (Cutler), Scarlett Johansson (Olivia Wenscombe) and Jackman

In turn-of-century London, magicians occupy the upper echelons of culture with artists of opera and drama

draws the audience into the lives of and at times feud rivalry between Angier and Borden through flashbacks. Intrigue finally, catching these eyes expectation Jackman relates the movie goers into its "prestige" phase.

Based on a novel of the same name by Christopher Priest, "Prestige" is a jaw-dropping act of emotionally conflicting forces which leaves the audience as a loss as to which side to root for or applause to.

And if the names above are not eminent enough, acclaimed filmmaker Christopher Nolan, who gave us the "Batman Begins," the "Memento," and "Insomnia" fame, is at the helm of the movie, in his element with his cinematic sensibilities, assisted by no less than a superb cast and crew.

But "Prestige" is not a movie about magic. Nolan's 56th character (the first was the highly praised "Following" in 1998) continues the director's penchant for a story line that, much like his previous works, is heady with twists and double-with duplicitous conditions.

Nolan has accomplished once again, predominantly Batman, morphs before viewers' eyes into the showman Angier. The longish to which he goes now to upstage and deceive Borden forces a crippling insecurity despite an otherwise successful career.

Bale's Borden, meanwhile, is a study in disrupted perfection—he absolutely commits to his craft even at the cost of his married life.

The story, therefore, does not allows for any clear definitions. Viewers might initially choose their sentiments from the two lead characters, but the fact is, both may also be forces in the way they hold their respective lives. The other way is also quite possible.

This show, more does my trick in the movie, is properly in how the characters' foreground and relative reconfiguration before

CAINE as the magician

BALE as Alfred Borden performing a magic trick

BATMAN and Wolverine square off.

Prestige

Unfortunately, like a magic act, the movie's secrets cannot be entirely revealed. If unveiled, they will render the movie too simple and predictable.

How, however, a short but pivotal role that of eminent Nikola Tesla (rock icon David Bowie), historically known for his feud rivalry with Thomas Edison, Tesla was responsible pushing the boundaries of science to his help, and was rumored to have experimented with robots and man-to-transporters.

But that's only trouble in Angier's incessant, lifelong prestige is merely never complicated, and yes, that translates into to much more complexity when the secrets revealed.

In the end, however, it is not the secrets that entertain. "The Prestige" positively leads viewers to conclude that everything has been righted, the halves put together, the disappeared returned in flesh, but not revealing how all of it has come to pass.

Because, at last, the success of each trick for in the audience not quite catching on, and the each trick. "Prestige" must leave that nagging question on whether the audience merely did not watch closely.

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ENTERTAINMENT
Editor Bronnie O. Velarde

Cannes fest exec heads Cinemanila jury

By Marinel R. Cruz

CHRISTIAN JELINE, DIRECTOR of the film department and deputy artistic delegate of the prestigious Cannes Film Festival, will sit as jury chair of the 8th Cinemanila International Film Festival's Digital Lokal Competition. The 13-day festival starts this week.

Jeline's work for the annual festival in the south of France involves choosing entries for the Cannes film fest's Competition, Un Certain Regard, Cinéfondation, and Short Films sections as well as accommodating with producers, directors and other film commissioners.

The Frenchman has also translated more than 100 English films to French, according to a statement from the Cinemanila-organizing committee.

Six Italian films will compete for the Lino Brocka Award in this year's Digital Lokal section.

Roberto Benfazio Jr.'s "Nanobalik Diwa," with Mark Anthony Fernandez, Albert Martinez, Meryll Soriano and Ping Medina, tells the story of couple Katrina and Carlos and the ancient ritual on life and immortality called nanobalik diwa.

Brylle Sarmo and Maya Martin's "Kulas ng Dayuhan" presents the story of young real estate broker Sarah (Alessandra de Rossi) forced to leave for the US during the Marshal Law regime. Upon her return, she acquires a mysterious camera that reveals unseen crimes that began on that fateful day in September 1972.

"Supercomputer" is an "ode to joy amidst poverty," according to its director Abner Abon dela Cruz. Set in the slums of Manila, it follows the lives of children who scrounge for garbage for a living.

Lawrence Fajardo's "Baker si Hunyo" features human build-star Sarsi Emmanuel as an aging male model and Mark Gil as her manipulative partner. Fajardo describes it as "a story of revenge and redemption."

Ara Razon, Shugo Francia and Jason Domingo's three-days-to-the-making "Sacred or Pagkabaog" centers on the lives of three characters: a child coping with "lust, perversion and abuse"; a killer hiding in the mountains; and a woman running away from the ghost of her twin sister.

Brillante Mendoza's "Masahor" tells the struggles of a 13-year-old boy named Jomar, who teaches middle-aged men affordable townsfolk to read and write in order for them to cast their votes in the national elections.

The Cinemanila film fest, which will showcase 75 full-length films from 25 countries in various sections, will be held from Nov. 3 to 15 at SM Cinemas (Megamall, North Edsa, Mall of Asia), Ayala Greenhills Cinema (Makati) and the NCCA Auditorium (Intramuros, Manila). This year's theme is "Babae sa ang Global Pinoy Cinema."

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'Sis' says sorry

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

NOW IT'S "SIS," GMA-7's MORNING TALK show, that's being watched by the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB).

In an Oct. 12 memo, the MTRCB reported that comedienne Candy Pangilinan, a guest on the show, "uttered the objectionable phrase [p— ina.'"

According to the report, the pejorative term was aired at 11 in the morning on Oct. 11.

"Tinanong mo, sinagot ko. Ang sagot ko ay ang tanong mo," Pangilinan was quoted as saying

'Brilliant cinematography'

By Marinel R. Cruz

DEBUT'S THRILLER with Angel Locsin in "Txt"

ABBY TUMBUMAN HORROR FLICK "TXT" AND Mark Reyes' romance-comedy film "Till I Met You" were given "B" and "B" ratings, respectively, by the Cinema Evaluation Board (CEB), citing both films' "excellent" and "brilliant" cinematography among the reasons for the laurative.

An A grade entitles a movie to a 100-percent tax rebate, while a B warrants a 45-percent rebate, said CEB chair Christine Dayrit.

"TXT," a co-production of Regal Films and APT Entertainment, is a grisly-blitz film for new director Mike Tuviera, said Dayrit.

"The result is very inspirative, although direction leaves much to be desired. She has to learn how to handle his actors," the CEB chief added.

The film, about a woman haunted by an unanswered call through her cellphone, was commended for its "very clean cinematography," as well as its "crisp-and-tight editing," said Dayrit.

Although one CEB member described the performances of lead actors Angel Locsin, Dennis Trillo and Glyn Ilano, as "lightweights," Dayrit said other members felt "they [were] inspired and credible."

She explained: "Dyan is appropriately menacing and terrifying; Angel is satisfactory as the damsel-in-distress; Dennis has had better roles; Ian he has to play the Goran but bland Romeo-to-wedding."

"So we agree in crowning the "TRU thin Vow" had been tough, the CEB chief said.

The Viva Films-GMA Network Films joint venture casts Regine Velasquez (Luisa) as a rom-artist who has her eyes on the wealth of an aging ex-cowboy (Eddie Garcia). Robin Padilla (Gabriel) plays Garcia's right-hand man determined to expose Velasquez's schemes but, in the process, falls in love with her.

"A heated question said the film is 'technically adequate but not enough to overcome the excesses of an established soap opera. Another said the script is somewhat predictable," Dayrit said.

But she said the film deserved the citation for its "exceptionally brilliant" cinematography. She also said it "touches the heart."

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AT THE CINEMAS

TFX

G1	1 PEARY	2 THE GRUDGE 2	3 WORLD TRADE CENTER	4 THE PRESTIGE
G4	1 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION	2 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION	3 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION	
	4 WORLD TRADE CENTER	5 OPEN SEASON	6 THE PRESTIGE	7 THE GRUDGE 3
GB1	1 THE GRUDGE 2	2 THE PRESTIGE		
GB3	1 THE GRUDGE 2	2 THE PRESTIGE		
	3 OPEN SEASON	4 THE DEPARTED	5 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION	
ATC	1 THE PRESTIGE	2 OPEN SEASON		
	3 THE GRUDGE 2	4 THE DEPARTED	5 WORLD TRADE CENTER	
ACC	1 THE PRESTIGE	2 OPEN SEASON	3 THE GRUDGE 2	4 PULSE
M2	1 THE GRUDGE 2	2 OPEN SEASON		
	3 THE BANQUET	4 WORLD TRADE CENTER	5 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION	

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1 THE BANQUET • TRX
2 THE PRESTIGE
3 THE DEPARTED
4 OPEN SEASON
5 THE GRUDGE 2
6 WORLD TRADE CENTER
7 FEAST
8 TXT
9 THE GUARDIAN
10 TILL I MET YOU

ERMITA

1 THE GRUDGE 2
2 OPEN SEASON
3 TXT
4 TILL I MET YOU
5 WORLD TRADE CENTER
6 FEAST
7 THE PRESTIGE

METRO EAST

1 WORLD TRADE CENTER
2 THE GRUDGE 2
3 OPEN SEASON
4 TILL I MET YOU
5 TXT
6 FEAST
7 THE PRESTIGE
8 THE GUARDIAN

NOVALICHES

1 THE GRUDGE 2
2 TILL I MET YOU
3 OPEN SEASON
4 THE PRESTIGE

CITYSQUARE MALABON

1 TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
2 TILL I MET YOU
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2 THE BREED
3 TILL I MET YOU
4 OPEN SEASON

LIPA

1 THE DEPARTED
2 OPEN SEASON
3 THE BREED
4 TILL I MET YOU

DASMARINAS

1 WORLD TRADE CENTER
2 THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
3 OPEN SEASON
4 TILL I MET YOU

ANGELES

1 THE PRESTIGE
2 OPEN SEASON
3 TILL I MET YOU
4 THE GRUDGE 2

IMUS

1 OPEN SEASON
2 THE PRESTIGE
3 THE GRUDGE 2
4 TILL I MET YOU

STARMILLS

1 OPEN SEASON
2 TXT
3 TILL I MET YOU
4 MY FIRST WEDDING
5 THE GRUDGE 2
6 THE PRESTIGE

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1 THE GUARDIAN
2 THE DEPARTED
3 DEAD OR ALIVE
4 THE BREED
5 OPEN SEASON
6 TILL I MET YOU

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2 OPEN SEASON
3 TILL I MET YOU
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FEEDBACK

'Harry Potter' fan

09:06 Globetrotter Ringdarrang (rdrobbins_in_magic@mymail.com)

Hi, po Ms. Rubrics! I happened to read your article today (Oct. 12) entitled "A London Visit to 'Harry Potter' 5 Set" and it left me in awe. Wow! Sobrang ganda po kaya! Oh obvious, I'm a die-hard "Harry Potter" fan.:) How I really wish I could be just a visitor's throw away... Thanks po for the article! I'm looking forward po to reading more "Harry Potter" articles in the future. More power!

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PROMO

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P8
P10
P15

PLDT

Nicole Richie seeks help for thinness

LOS ANGELES... SOCIALITE Nicole Richie, whose rail-thin appearance in recent photos has stoked tabloid speculation of an eating disorder, has checked into a treatment facility to address her inability to gain weight, her publicists said on Thursday.

NICOLE RICHIE

"She is working with a team of doctors and specialists whose focus is nutrition," spokespersons Nicole Ferrea said in a statement. "It is important that she achieves this goal in a healthy way as this is not a treatment for any psychological issues."

Richie, the 25-year-old daughter of singer Lionel Richie, has publicly acknowledged her obvious loss of weight in recent months, telling Vanity Fair magazine: "I know I'm too thin right now... I'm not happy with the way I look."

And she told People magazine that "some" over the breaking-with her former fiancee Bauer had briefly affected her eating habits. But she has vehemently denied to Women's media reports suggesting she suffered from an eating disorder.

Her admission to the stubborn-fled facility has forced a delay in production of the latest installment of her popular TV reality show, "A Simple Life," producers said. Reuters

Oscar buzz

LOS ANGELES – Penelope Cruz calls it the hardest role she's ever played, and if early reviews and award buzz hold up, her portrayal of an abused girl's mute in "Volver" could win Cruz the first-ever Oscar for a Spanish actress.

The movie debuts in major US cities on Dec 3, and reunites Cruz with award-winning director Pedro Almodovar, who cast the then relatively unknown Spanish beauty in his 1997 movie "Live Flesh" and later in "All About My Mother."

Despite the funny moments in "Volver (Coming Back)" – showing sexual abuse with anything but a serious mind is hard, and getting the right mix of comedy and tragedy challenged 30-year-old Cruz.

"It's the most difficult and complex character I've ever had put in my hands," she said. "I knew women who have gone through things that could have destroyed them, but they kept fighting... My character is not a victim." Reuters

A 'legend' celebrated

LOS ANGELES—Country singer Reba McEntire has a glitzy roster of friends and fans, and many of them came out to the Kodak Theatre to honor her Thursday night.

Country stars Dolly Parton, Barbara Mandrell, Trisha Yearwood and JoAnn Rimes were among the luminaries walking the red carpet before the taping of the tribute, an event part of Country Music Television's "CMT Giants" series.

"Well, I said 'no' a couple of times," McEntire told AP Television. "And, then, finally, they said, 'No, we're really serious, and we really want to do it.' And I said, 'Well, all right.'"

The session queen, 51, first found fame with chart-toppers such as "Whoever's in New England" and "Does He Love You." HOT 93 shows, "Reba," has been running since 2001, and was one of the highest-rated shows on the recently disbanded WB network, where it left prime time sparingly.

Looking down the star-studded activist line, McEntire was impressed by the turnout.

"Well, it's very humbling," she said, "very flattering. I am so big hearted, to say the least. I am just the luckiest person."

"I think we have to recommend and celebrate our legends, 'cause we're losing them," said Wynonna Judd.

Pop singer Kelly Clarkson gushed praise. "I am here to celebrate Reba's achievements," she said. "I love her. I adore her... She's just done so many great things, and so many great things for people. She's just a really great person, amazing." AP

Leave 'em alone

LILLOOET, Makati...The father of the 13-month-old Malaysian boy Hindraman is trying to adopt national Friday that he supports her and calculated human rights attorneys here who want the courts to review the process.

"I am surprised when these guys are up to," Mohsin Shinda told journalists outside the courtroom where a hearing on the human rights appeal's chief judge was held. Hindu said my family agreed with the adoption. I just want these people to leave my son alone." AP

KELLY CLARKSON LEANN RIMES DOLLY PARTON WYNONNA SCOTT NEEVES

New Eastwood

There's a new line among the soldiers in Clint Eastwood's World War II drama, "Flags of Our Fathers"...from Reuters, the director's protagonist on.

Reuters, 26, makes his big-screen debut as a 19-year-old in war scenes. He and a bunch of other guys smoke, play cards and listen to music while waiting to go to battle.

Dramatic Reuters is a fan of the movie, produced by Steven Spielberg, and which recounts the story of one of the six Americans who raised the flag on Iwo Jima. Seeing it in his famous dad, Reuters told AP Television "Flags" strong persuasion, "It's the culmination of everything, of all his words coming to this."

Eastwood is still with his second wife, Dina. Reuters and his 10-year-old sister Kathryn's mother is Jacelyn Reuters, a former flight attendant.

You're the one

NEW YORK—Hundreds of musical wannabes lined up on Broadway in the chilly dark early on Friday morning to begin the process of who would Caesar would rap them, and say, "You're the one that I want."

A new NBC reality television show of the same name has thrown open the casting call doors for the lead roles of Grease music Sandy in the movie by Olivia Newton-John and John Travolta...family Dombrowski and Danny Zuko.

The show, produced by Reuters NBC Worldwide Productions, follows the model of the BBC's "How Do I Solve a Problem Like Maria?" in which Andrew Andrews' wannabes compete to star in a new production of "The Sound of Music" to open here this year.

"Grease" was first seen in Chicago in 1971 and opened on Broadway in 1972. The 1978 film was one of the highest-grossing movie musicals. Reuters

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

007-6963 GUARANTEED SEATS

OPENS NOV 1 2006

FROM THE MAKERS OF THE AWARD WINNING AND CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED "MAHARLIKA"

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FACT: THE BIGGEST AND DEADLIEST CARNIVOROUS SNAKES ARE FOUND IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
-The Guinness Book of World Records

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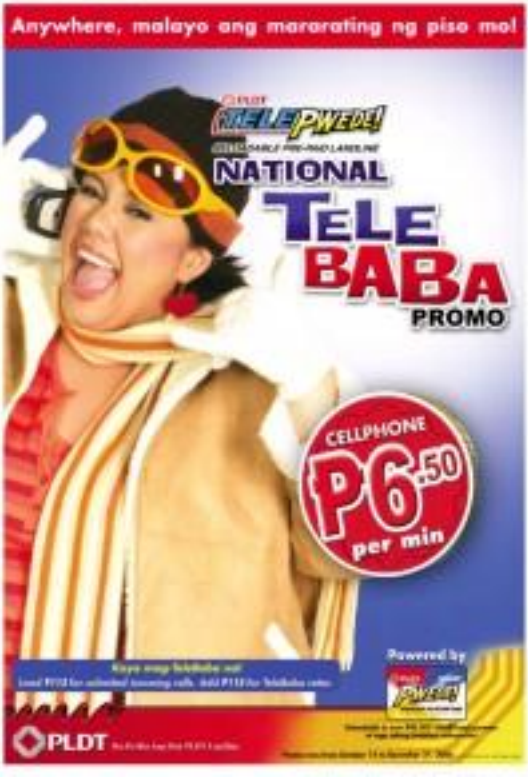


ENTERTAINMENT

BLOODY Krista Allen in "Feast"

Ghastly gorging

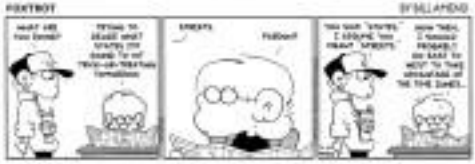
By Oliver M. Palomtoot
Contributor

FIRST OFF, THE AD MATERIALS FOR "Feast" only show in part the official poster of the movie—a close-up of one of its bizarre monster encounters. In one corner, there's a collage of people you won't see in the film, depicting a few sexy and well-dressed women carrying guns. Not that anyone would be fooled into expecting those non-existent characters in the story, but it's unbelievably misleading. Everything, that's another unnerving example of the ongoing, deliberate revamping of poster materials for the local viewing market.

Anyway, "Feast" is a relatively horror film that's more repulsive than it is scary, to screenplay the winner of Ben Affleck and Matt Damon's third Project Greenlight contest. It's a low-budgeted monster flick—and it shows. Some show-involving special efforts are noticeably obscured to hide the presumably unrealistic-looking creature suits. But while the glimpses of the horrific monsters are few and fleeting, Project Greenlight director winners John Gulager and his crew show they're capable of making a clever...if cheesy and tradition-al...horror flick on a tight budget.

There isn't much of a story, but the script by Marcus Dunstan and Patrick Melton gets hilarious at times. A quiet roadside tavern is besieged by a number of man-eating creatures of unknown origin, trapping in a favorite and employees...an interesting, goofy mix of characters—inside the dark, tranquil building. With very few weapons and fewer sensible escapes, the humans realize soon enough that it's only a matter of time before the disfigured beasts break down the walls.

FOOTBOT — BY BILL AMEND



A. UPIN — BY JESS ABAYA

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY — BY PH JUNIOR

NUTTS — BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

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ATOMO AND WEBBY — BY LINA GARCELLANO

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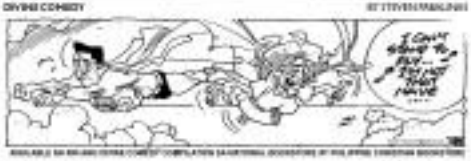
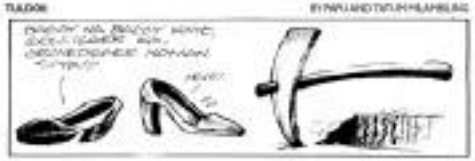


RIKO MACHINE — BY MARK ABEJA

HOROSCOPOS — BY JOHN TEJICO

TULOY — BY PAPI LAND TATUM PALAMBLAG



BEH — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Cavan

	6	7	1					
	4		7			9	6	5
	3	5	6			4		1
						2	1	9
	8			5			3	
6	1	2						
1		4			6	3	5	
3	7	8			4		9	
					3	1	8	

Difficulty Level ★

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	9	1	2	5	7	4	6	3
3	4	5	8	9	6	2	1	7
6	2	7	3	1	4	9	8	5
4	6	8	7	3	5	6	2	1
7	5	9	1	2	6	3	4	8
1	3	2	6	4	8	5	7	9
2	8	6	9	7	3	1	5	4
9	1	4	5	6	2	7	3	8
5	7	3	4	8	1	8	9	2

BRIDGE ★★★★★

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Staring death in the face

"WORLD TRADE CENTER," OLIVER STONE'S take on the 9/11 terrorist attack on New York City, could have been shot on a big-hang spectacle, concentrating on the more savings that moved.

However, aside from some cutaway shots of crowds rushing out of the stricken twin towers, the film opts to tell the mainstream intimate story of two policemen trapped in the debris of one of the buildings.

The decision is an astute one, because the tragic event could still be too close for comfort for many Americans. Focusing on the main aspect of the tragedy may have turned off as emotionally unsettled viewers before that were ready to confront the traumatic attack on the big screen.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

In, "World Trade Center" chooses to follow the two cops (Nicolas Cage and Michael Peña) as they go about their business on Sept. 11, 2001, expecting the day to be as ordinary as they come. But they were suddenly forced to stare death in the face as they bravely volunteered to help some unsafe victims escape and survive.

As her would have it, the cops weren't able to do much helping before the towers collapsed, and trapped them in its ruins.

At first, there were three of them, but the third policeman died on them, so Cage and Peña's characters had to contend with their ordeal alone.

Stone turns out to be the theme of the movie's second half, as the cops endure hours upon hours of absolutely no contact at all with the outside world—and no hope of rescue in sight, or within hearing distance.

To keep from giving up the ghost, the cops share stories about their lives and their loved ones, and keep each other awake by talking to each other so they don't go to sleep and give up the fight for life and survival.

It's when the film cuts away to the cops' families that the story of heroism in the danger of being eroded by "the industry" occasional displays of mawkish sentimentality. We are also struck by the fact that practically nobody in the film pants.

Upon reflection, however, our conclusion is that these less than heroic scenes are needed, to provide an instructive contrast to the cops' bravery. These contrary moments essentially let us know that, before the audience with a measure of cynical realism first makes the cops' heroism all the more moving.

The storytelling then slows down during the movie's final third section, but viewers' interest perks up again when a volunteer (Jay Hernandez) goes in and—and their rescue is belatedly offered.

Viewers in the need of inspiration and a boost of empathetic heroism should count themselves in a screening of "World Trade Center."

Its true cops' tale of bravery while rising into the face of daunting adversity and death is so realistically told that it makes it easier for us to see ourselves as potential heroes in our own lives and spheres of influence.

'El Filibusterismo'

GANTIMPALA Theater Foundation presents "El Filibusterismo," a dramatization of Jose Rizal's second novel, June Nov. 3 to 26 at various venues. Call 895-5745.

The play is public: **Bembor Cavanilla, Frida Bella Paz, Jojit Lorenzo, Chiqui Xavier Rodrigo, Bong Embido, Jorge Cabello** and **Perry Escaño**, and is directed by **Soxy Topacio**.

Ghastly gorging

Peter page B1

and make quick meals of them.

It starts imaginatively: Each character is introduced with a short comic-issue monochrome, static shot, accompanied by a song unique to that person, as well as profile information such as "name" and "life expectancy."

The characters are descriptive: Hero (Jim Gaser), the guy-coming but show-loyal protector character; Coach (Rhoey Bellard), the motivational speaker; Her Whack (Josh Zuckerman), the "dweebish-confused-adolescence-caped-Christian" (Sara Stewart), there's quiet-thinking wife and, well, you-get the idea. The joke-y "life-expectancy" parts are especially effective when—through the course of the story, the body count mostly proves this film's clueless-casualty projection wrong.

Other that's out of the way, "Rose" falls back on a more familiar frame, and goes for a typical genre result, relative few scary situations. People get the in-some of the slumber is not disgusting ways imaginable. Think of a smaller-scaled, less engaging mash-up of "Night of the Living Dead," "Texas Buck Till Dawn," and "Dog Soldiers."

The chaos is done predictably enough, though, the script's editing can be annoying as it is clearly in action shots. Make the final product a lacking in punch and suspense, it has a decidedly enough cast that keeps you from neglecting that you pursuit of this bloody monster movie to prepare to be hurt place.

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